

Conference Proceedings 2007

- An Unedited Collection of Papers-

The Women of Appalachia:

Their Heritage and Accomplishments



October 19-20, 2007
Zanesville, Ohio
Ninth Annual Conference



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WELCOME

Welcome to Ohio University-Zanesville and to Zanesville, Ohio. We are so pleased to have you visit our campus and our town. These *Proceedings*, from the Ninth Annual Women of Appalachia: Their Heritage and Accomplishments Conference, represent the scholarly activities of many individuals who have devoted their time and energies to the study of Appalachia.

The Conference, however, is so much more than presentations of academic research. It is also a time to truly embrace the history, the culture, and the women of Appalachia. We appreciate your participation in our conference, which we hope will help to promote and foster an understanding of Appalachia.

Enjoy,

Candy J. McBride
Director
Office of Continuing Education



Ohio University - Zanesville

FOREWORD

Welcome to Ohio University – Zanesville and to our conference, The Women of Appalachia: Their Heritage and Accomplishments. This is our Ninth Annual conference and we know that to many of you we say not just “welcome” but “welcome back!” We appreciate your support for our conference over the years: your attendance as well as your involvement.

With this volume of Proceedings we celebrate nine years of academic discussion, networking, companionship and friendship. We appreciate your help in this annual renewal of the strong tradition of Appalachia and Appalachian Women. We hope you find this volume of papers of interest and of use in your scholarly pursuits and, if you are faculty, in your classes.

As always, welcome! We hope you enjoy your stay with us!

Sincerely,

Jim Fonseca
Dean and Professor of Geography
Ohio University - Zanesville

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APPALACHIAN WOMEN AND CANCER: FIRST, A PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION

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The American Cancer Society Partnership

Abstract

In recent years Appalachian Ohio has ranked highest in death rates due to colorectal and breast cancers, and second highest for death rates due to cervical cancer as compared to other states in Appalachia, where death rates exceed national averages. Culture-appropriate communication is essential to inform women about cancer risks and the availability of screenings; how to interpret test results, ask questions and find resources; and how to cope as caregivers. This presentation describes efforts by Ohio University Scripps College of Communication with the American Cancer Society to improve communication and save lives of women in Appalachia.

Introduction

Nobody likes to talk about cancer. The word alone conjures feelings of anxiety and dread. We may know that seeing the doctor regularly is important, and that screenings are recommended. But it is difficult to schedule time for a screening that may be unpleasant, will undoubtedly be expensive and may deliver unwanted news. It's not surprising that the American Cancer Society's (ACS) quest to reduce cancer deaths though early detection and treatment has been an uphill battle, which has been successful in many parts of the country, but less so in Appalachia.

In 2005 the ACS and the Ohio University Scripps College of Communication (OU-SCOC) formed a partnership. The long-range goal of this partnership is to reduce the rates of cancer incidence and deaths that in Appalachia Ohio are much higher than in other parts of the state and the nation. According to the ACS, death rates from colon and rectal cancer are over 14% higher in Appalachia Ohio than in other parts of Ohio. Death rates from cervical cancer are almost 43% higher in Appalachia than in other parts of Ohio. And death rates from lung cancer are about 9% higher in Appalachia than in other parts of Ohio. (1) Additionally, a survey by the Ohio Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BFSS) in 1999-2001 found that residents of Appalachia smoke more and use smokeless tobacco more than do other residents of Ohio. The survey also revealed that women in Appalachia had fewer mammograms, Pap tests and sigmoidoscopies than did other Ohio residents. As we know, early screenings and treatment reduce mortality rates, but women who do not get screenings or treatments, and women who smoke greatly increase their risk of having and succumbing to cancer. (2)

ACS and SCOC have sponsored several programs and activities designed to address disparities in Appalachia that may contribute to the high cancer mortality rates. The first effort has been to increase general health literacy in the area by underwriting

two seasons of the Public Broadcasting program, *Health Visions*. The WOUB Center for Public Media produces *Health Visions*, a 13-part series on health issues, which is aired in the Fall and repeated in the Spring. WOUB transmits in Athens and Cambridge and reaches most of Appalachian Ohio and parts of West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, through broadcast, cable and satellite.

Secondly, ACS/SCOC has collaborated with the Appalachia Reads literacy program to provide a Health Literacy Conference in Spring 2007 at the OU-Southern Campus in Ironton, with a second scheduled for October 2007 in Zanesville. The emphasis of these conferences is to help health care providers understand and communicate effectively with their Appalachia Ohio patients. Health Literacy, as defined by the Partnership for Clear Health Communication, is the ability to read, understand and act on health information. Research shows that most consumers need help understanding health care information, regardless of reading level. However, one out of five American adults reads at the 5th grade level or below, and the average American reads at the 8th or 9th grade level, yet most health care informational materials are written at the 10th grade level. Thus, it is not surprising that literacy skills are a stronger predictor of an individual's health status than are age, income, employment, educational level, or racial/ethnic group. (3)

Effective communication between health provider and patient is a two-way street that requires understanding and respect, and in that light, the ACS/SCOS-sponsored Health Literacy Conferences are strongly dedicated to providing doctors, nurses and other health care professionals a better understanding of Appalachian people and culture.

Thirdly, in 2006 the ACS/SCOC announced that it would accept and review competitive proposals for graduate student research on topics relating to cancer in Appalachia. Of the proposals submitted, three were funded and are currently in progress.

Current Research Projects

The three research projects funded by ACS/SCOC include a study of promotion and patient satisfaction with services provided by the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine's Mobile Health Clinic which serves communities around Athens in Appalachia Ohio. This research plans to reveal factors that compel patients to seek services at the Mobile Health Clinic and their level of satisfaction with the services provided by staff in the Mobile Health Clinic. Results of this research project will help to improve promotion and service provision in the Mobile Health Clinic and may be instrumental in the efforts to secure funds necessary for the Mobile Health Clinic to continue to offer services.

The second research project is an innovative approach to provider training on the topics of end of life and palliative care. Young playwright found herself at a young age in the role of caretaker to both of her parents who were diagnosed and died with cancer. Her play, "Confessions of a Reluctant Caregiver," portrays the depth and dimension of demands placed on caregivers of any age. The play provides insights into the humor,

confusion, frustration, love, anger, acceptance and hope that families encounter as they face the end of a life. The playwright has asked her audiences to complete a questionnaire at the conclusion of each reading of the play, which she hopes will be informative for both her and the audience members/future health providers. Her play has won a competition in Atlanta, GA, and thereby qualified for a competitive reading in New York in the near future. Plans are in progress to take the play "on the road" to regional campuses of Ohio University that offer nursing programs and the hope and expectation that other appropriate audiences will emerge.

The last of the research projects supported by the ACS/SCOC Partnership is a project to assess structural, cultural and psychosocial barriers to and facilitators of screenings for breast, cervical, colorectal and prostate cancers among Appalachian adults. The researchers also aim to create a template for media dissemination that would provide information to allay barriers that the study identifies as most salient. This study consists of three phases the first of which is a telephone survey of 200 adults living in Appalachia Ohio for information regarding family history, perceived barriers to cancer screenings and how media is utilized in the acquisition of information about cancer. The second phase of the research will survey clients of the WIC programs, who have been shown to be less likely to avail themselves of cancer screening opportunities. Phase three of this project will bring focus groups together to gain information and commentary to supplement that gained during Phase 1 and 2.

Results of all three studies will be made available through appropriate outlets in academic, professional and public spheres.

After Screenings - What?

The American Cancer Society has recently lent its voice to the chorus of those who are concerned about health provision to all citizens of the U.S.A. and is promoting a resolution to the serious problems faced and posed by the chronically uninsured and underinsured in America.

In May 2007 the American Cancer Society joined numerous other public health organizations in America to demand that health care availability for all Americans become a major concern in the Presidential election of 2008. According to the American Cancer Society, the biggest single obstacle to beating cancer in America is the lack of access to screenings and treatment. Many Americans have no insurance, limited access to physicians and clinics, suffer long periods of unemployment and lack even transportation to medical services. If cancer is to be beaten in America, all citizens must have access to screenings and to treatments recommended by those screenings.

Of course, for some cancers, such as lung cancer, prevention is the best cure. Unfortunately, early detection of lung cancer does not necessarily indicate that rapid treatment will result in cures. In the case of lung cancer, prevention is the best cure, and residents of Appalachia need to be informed and persuaded of those facts and of the ways that they can protect and extend their own lives.

The ACS/SCOC Partnership continues to explore new avenues that will be effective in the effort to expand understanding and health literacy to residents of Appalachia Ohio. Availability of health insurance to provide all Americans with the screenings and treatments they require would be of great help in bringing down the high rates of cancer deaths in Appalachia Ohio.

If readers have questions about the OU-COM Mobile Health Clinic, the ACS/SCOC Partnership or the play, "Confessions of a Reluctant Caregiver," please contact the Scripps College of Communication at 740-593-4883, or OU College of Osteopathic Medicine Community Health Programs and Area Health Education at (740) 593-9364.

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Grant Narratives
Travis Lovejoy
&
Jennette Lovejoy

Problem Statement and Research Questions

A primary purpose of this study is to assess structural, cultural, and psychosocial barriers to breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancer screening in Appalachian Ohio adults. In the U.S., cancer disproportionately affects residents of Appalachia.¹ Regional cancer mortality rates exceed the national average, and this is most pronounced in rural areas of central Appalachian states such as Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Ohio.¹⁻³ In recent years, Ohio Appalachia ranked highest in death rates for colorectal and breast cancers, while ranking second highest in deaths due to cervical cancer, when compared to all other Appalachian states.² These disparities may be due, in part, to the high rates of advanced-stage cancer at initial diagnosis due to non-engagement in preventive activities such as recommended cancer screening.³ As such, three primary research questions guide this proposed study.

RQ1: What are the barriers and facilitators to cancer screening for adult residents of Appalachian Ohio who meet screening criteria?

RQ2: Are there existing services that can mitigate the perceived and actual barriers to cancer screening reported by Ohio Appalachia residents?

RQ3: What sources do Appalachian Ohioans use for health and information news?

Literature Review

Numerous studies have identified demographic, health, and behavioral predictors of cancer screening for Appalachian residents.⁴⁻⁸ Two studies that used data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System found that higher educational attainment, higher income, having health insurance, regular engagement in preventive health services, and being married increased the likelihood that women received recommended screening for breast and cervical cancer.^{4, 5} Findings for health status, however, were mixed.⁴ While the presence of diabetes and obesity increased the likelihood of having a mammogram in the past two years, practicing health-protective behaviors (e.g., not smoking, being physically fit) also increased the likelihood of having a mammogram. A possible explanation for this seeming contradiction is that engagement with a healthcare provider is the most important factor in predicting cancer screening. For example, diabetics likely visit a primary care physician regularly and thus receive cancer screening recommendations from their doctors. Likewise, individuals who practice health-protective behaviors may be more oriented to preventive care and seek out doctor consultations of their own volition. In both cases, individuals receive cancer screening recommendations.

A similar cluster of cancer screening predictors have been identified in studies that focused solely on rural, central Appalachian states.⁶⁻⁸ Schoenberg et al. found that the absence of health insurance, lower income, and lack of transportation were barriers to cervical cancer screening among female Appalachian residents of Kentucky and West Virginia.⁶ Other structural and belief barriers included inflexible work schedules and hospital clinic hours, difficulty arranging child care, fear that one's health provider would make judgments about poor health practices, and failure of health providers to recommend screening. Similar barriers have been identified for colorectal cancer screening, in addition to lack of screening knowledge, fear of cancer, and the belief that screening is not necessary in the absence of disease symptoms.⁷ Shell et al. elucidated possible reasons Appalachian health providers sometimes withhold recommendations for cancer screening.⁸ According

to these providers, many residents do not value primary prevention activities and only visit doctors for acute conditions, which often limits the time providers have for prevention counseling. In addition, the providers reported that Appalachian residents possess a belief of fatalistic determinism, which is often tied closely to religious beliefs.

Though previous studies have identified numerous predictors of non-engagement in cancer screening activities, few have investigated individuals' beliefs about susceptibility and severity of various forms of cancer. An investigation of these beliefs is critical because if individuals do not believe that cancer is a serious disease, and one that they may acquire at some point in their lives, alleviating structural and financial barriers is futile.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Two theories of behavior change, the Health Beliefs Model (HBM) and Social Ecological Theory (SET), guide our conceptual framework.^{9, 10} According to the HBM, six internal factors determine one's likelihood of engaging in health behaviors: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy. In the context of cancer screening, individuals would be more likely to seek and engage in screening activities if they believed that (1) they were highly susceptible to cancer, (2) cancer was a serious illness, (3) they could benefit from being screened, (4) there existed few social and structural barriers to being screened, (5) they would remember to be screened as recommended, and (6) they were confident that they could follow through with the screening procedures.

The underlying tenet of SET is that individuals cannot be separated from the social structures in which they nest. Specifically, individuals may be parts of families, which may belong to organizations (such as religious groups), which are in turn part of a larger community. According to SET, these interpersonal and environmental nesting relationships affect individuals' behavior just as individuals have the power to shape their social environments. In the context of cancer screening, SET suggests that screening barriers are necessarily influenced by individuals' social structures.

Target Population, Planned Research, and Methodology

To be eligible for the study, participants must meet the following criteria: (1) English-speaking, (2) female at least 18 years old or male at least 50 years old, and (3) residing in one of 28 designated Appalachian Ohio counties¹¹ (Holmes county residents are excluded due to low cancer morbidity and mortality rates¹). The age and gender criteria result from American Cancer Society screening guidelines for average risk males and females across the lifespan.¹²

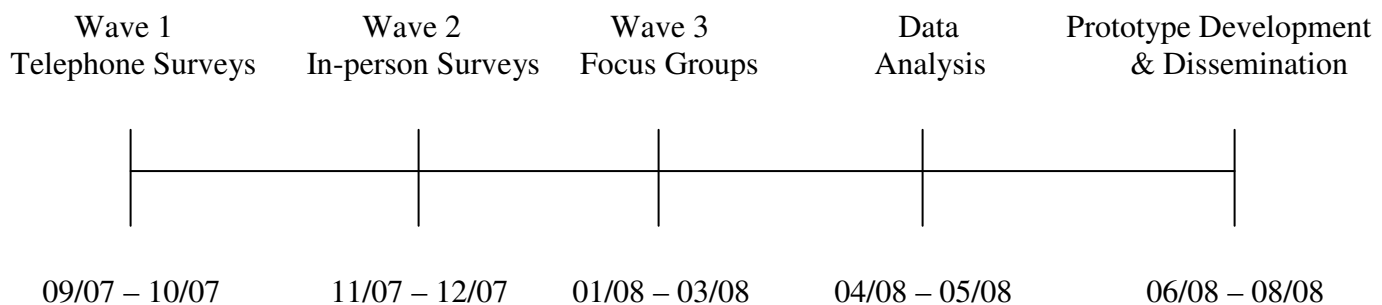
Data collection will take place in three waves. In the first wave, the Scripps Survey Research Center will conduct 200 telephone surveys, using random-digits dialing procedures, that assess individuals' cancer screening histories and barriers and facilitators to screening activities. Participants will be sampled from the 28 designated Appalachian Ohio counties.

The second wave will consist of a convenience sample of 75 low socioeconomic status residents. We chose to oversample this demographic because previous studies have shown significant correlations between low socioeconomic status and non-engagement in cancer screening activities among Appalachian residents.⁴⁻⁷ Participants will be recruited in the waiting rooms of (1) welfare offices and (2) women, infants, and children (WIC) offices in Athens County and the six contiguous Appalachian Ohio counties. After obtaining informed consent, participants will complete a 20-minute self-administered paper and pencil survey. Researchers will administer surveys to participants who express reading discomfort during the informed consent process. Participants will be paid \$10 for their time.

In the final wave, guided focus groups will be conducted to enhance findings from the two surveys. Focus group members will be recruited from participants in wave 2. Though group size will

be determined based on geographic feasibility, a minimum of four and maximum of 12 participants will comprise a single group as suggested by Krueger.¹³ Focus groups will be divided by gender and led by a same-gender researcher to ensure participant comfort when disclosing potentially sensitive material. For example, Jennette or Jessica would lead a women's group, while Travis would lead a men's group. All group sessions will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded by researchers for thematic content. Based on Grounded Theory, this will be an iterative process until we achieve thematic saturation.¹⁴ Though it is difficult to predict the number of groups required to reach saturation, previous literature suggests that five groups of four to eight participants will be sufficient.⁸ Focus group participants will be paid \$30 as compensation for approximately two hours of their time. See figure 1 below for a timeline of intended data collection and dissemination activities.

Figure 1. Timeline for data collection and dissemination activities.



Potential Applications and Distribution

Our primary dissemination aim is to create a product that can be used by Appalachian Ohio residents. Past research has shown that many consumers receive the majority of their health information through media, suggesting that media may be capable of shaping public beliefs and individual health behaviors.¹⁵ Throughout the course of data collection, we plan to identify regional agencies and programs that will help address and mitigate barriers to cancer screening. The local ACS/Scripps partnership has a wealth of resources and networking relationships to assist us with this process. An example of a potentially underused service is the Ohio University College of Medicine mobile units that offer breast and cervical cancer screening and cancer prevention education to uninsured women in 10 Southeast Ohio counties.¹⁶ Once we have identified the salient barriers to cancer screening, we will develop an information prototype in the form of a brochure, letter, and/or other print medium. This dissemination method will be determined based on participant responses to survey and focus group questions regarding most frequently used media forms. As suggested by Alcalay and Taplin¹⁷, our dissemination recommendation may involve more than one media form (e.g., health brochure and community news letter). The information prototype will objectively list barriers to screening that participants identified in surveys and focus groups and provide brief descriptions and contact information for programs that can alleviate or lessen the severity of these barriers. Though limited funding will not likely allow for the mass production and distribution of this information pamphlet, we intend to apply for funding that will allow us, or others, to produce and distribute it. In addition to the prototype, we will write press releases and health articles for local papers throughout Southeast Ohio that highlight our findings and the information found in the prototype.

Within the academic and professional sphere, we plan to take our findings to local, regional, and national forums such as annual conferences of the American Association for Cancer Research, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the American Public Health Association, or the Ohio Public Health Association. We also plan to publish our findings in peer review professional journals. Findings from this, and similar research, clearly have policy implications. It is our hope that these data can inform legislators about the health care needs of their constituents and that policy addressing these needs will be considered. The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is an exemplar of such policy in action.¹⁸

Anticipated Barriers and/or Problems

We anticipate some barriers through the course of this research but have taken steps to attenuate the potential influence of these barriers. First, as “outsiders”, we may meet participant resistance in our recruitment efforts at the welfare and WIC offices. However, we have developed, and will continue to develop, relationships with agency staff who can assist us in the recruitment process (see attached letters of support). In fact, previous studies that utilized community participatory research methodologies have been successful in recruiting participants from Appalachia.^{19, 20}

We also anticipate some difficulty identifying an exhaustive list of services available to Southeast Ohio residents that will help to facilitate cancer screening practices. Along these lines, the instability of some existing programs due to tenuous funding streams may lead to the extinction of programs we identify. This, however, is an inevitable sequela of current health policy climate. Throughout the course of the study, we will gather information about available services in Southeast Ohio and contiguous border counties that help to minimize or alleviate potential barriers to cancer screening. We acknowledge, however, that no existing program will address all identified barriers.

Finally, we may have some difficulty reaching all Appalachian Ohio residents during the educational media dissemination phase of this project. Given that many areas of Ohio Appalachia are geographically isolated and may receive little contact with sources of media, we plan on being creative with our dissemination by reaching out to small community newspapers and group newsletters, with the eventual goal of also distributing a print brochure in local service agencies that helps to address perceived barriers to cancer screening.

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CALLIE HASH WRIGHT—MOUNTAIN WOMAN FROM SUGAR GROVE,
VIRGINIA'S FIRST LADY MAYOR, 1930-1934, AND PROPONENT OF
THE CONTINUED INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF TROUTDALE

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the town of Troutdale, Virginia, just over Iron Mountain's top, was threatened with extinction by a movement to dissolve the town's charter. On the ballot as a write-in candidate supporting charter status was my maternal grandmother, Callie Hash Wright. Miss Callie's victory marked the first successful election of a woman mayor in Virginia and ascendancy of the "town-crowd" working for the betterment of Troutdale. Her small part in history represents the importance of leadership among Appalachian women in their communities.

"I have had a good, long life, not all of it easy but
wonderful by the will of God. I loved every day I
have lived."

(Letter attached to Callie Hash Wright's last will
testament, dated 14 February 1980).

Perhaps on Valentine's Day nearly six years before her death when my maternal grandmother, Callie Hash Wright, or Miss Callie, wrote this addition to her last will and testament, she was remembering great stretches of time past from her youthful days in Sugar Grove, Virginia, in the Southwest Mountains, among this nation's pristine air and most scenic forests, back up across the mountain into Troutdale where she and William Foster Wright, Mr. Bill, or "Du-Dad," as we called him, continued their life together among the townsfolk of Troutdale. My recent memories of my grandmother do not conjure up romantic notions of this strong, quiet woman who raised four boys, two girls, one with special needs, a grandson, cows, hogs, wash on the line, snap green-beans, plump red and yellow tomatoes, the ones you can no longer get in the supermarket strip malls. No, Callie would not melt butter on Valentine's Day. If she could still be working at the Bank of Marion, (ten miles over the mountain from Sugar Grove), the establishment that forced her into retirement after thirty-five years of service, she would have put on her plain black pumps, twirled up her waist long graying hair, wound into a loose bun held with black bobby pins, nestled her black purse into the crux of her arm and walked down the hill from Pearl Avenue to Church and then Main Street in Marion, Virginia. My grandmother worked as a teller in Marion, and whenever she could catch a ride with Du, a neighbor or relative who came to visit, Callie would travel up and down the mountain back into Sugar Grove, her homestead soon to be left to her by her husband and his mother Malinda Wright Testerman, where on this hundred acre farm of spring wells, timber, rolling pastures and wild blackberry bushes, Callie would tend to her large garden and sit in the small-porched house now leaning among the still beauty of the mountain forest, furry grassland, and clovered hills.

Two years ago, when my younger sister and I gathered new interest to explore Callie and her doings, we stopped in Troutdale to tour Ripshin, the home of the writer Sherwood Anderson, who was a friend of Miss Callie and Du. Like other Northern academic carpet baggers, we too wanted to rub elbows with the famous ghosts of the literary South. On this trip, we met up with Don Francis of Marion, an Anderson devotee, who also knew my grandmother. We asked him what he remembered about her. Don quipped, “She was from the mountains and lived in Sugar Grove and Troutdale and everyone thought highly of her.” I turned to note my sister’s reaction. The memories of my grandmother were vivid in my mind. I could only think she was strong willed, a hard worker, strict, of few but important words, and clan like. But the respect with which Mr. Francis remembered her did not match my experience of a somewhat difficult personality. I remembered our summer visits to Marion and Sugar Grove, and during those times I spent the hours wondering if my grandmother who I was trying to love would say something special to me, but to no avail. I spurted out to Mr. Francis, “Callie could be a bit mean and at times was not very nice.”

Challenging my unwitting disloyalty, Mr. Francis bluntly retorted, “She was a mountain girl.” He left it at that, and I drifted back into the past when five decades ago our family car trekked every summer from Dayton, Ohio, over winding West Virginia mountains, arrived in Bluefield in one piece and waited to cross into Virginia, and my sister spending most of the trip cradling her nervous stomach in the back seat, and I picturing my grandmother’s still face would hold our chins out the back seat windows feeling better as we finally breathed in Virginia’s comforting air. Two years ago, there in the graveled parking lot of the Sugar Grove diner, the modern day city women tried to scoop up “just facts” about Callie and her life in Troutdale among her people. Put in my place, I realized later that what Mr. Francis expressed was truly the definition of the last refuge of this still, calm place I had come to seek Callie’s past, nestled among the mountains surrounding high and the earth quiet below.

It is from this strong mountain heritage that my grandmother came, “... deep in the lush iron mountains of these old Southwestern Virginia Highlands ... “ (Gaterud C1), where struggles were many but strengths lay fast. It was hard to imagine that my grandmother became the first lady mayor of the state of Virginia, against the backdrop of the Great Depression, but not really, after I examined her character and mountain values that now have become my own. This character and these values helped rescue the small town of Troutdale, nestled in the Jefferson National Forest, from the threat of extinction by a movement in 1930 to dissolve the town charter and reduce it to an insignificant mark on the map.

Born in Sugar Grove, March 30, 1894, the third child of William Jackson Hash and Martha “Mattie” Ellen Scott Hash, my grandmother settled in Troutdale in 1921 with her husband, Mr. Bill or Du, also from Sugar Grove and their three oldest children, Stella Josephine, Rex Wilson, and William Leroy after leaving mother Mattie Hash, Grandma Lindy (Malinda Testerman, Du’s mother) and surviving siblings Mary, Fred, Curtis, Henry, Nellie, and Kate in Sugar Grove. I still imagine her leaving to go such a short but significant distance, as she was so used to staying put and being outdoors at home most of the time. “Callie was used to hard work,” my mother, Callie’s youngest daughter, Carolyn Joy Bossmann remembers. “She loved the outdoors, animals, and the

garden. Her sister Mary worked indoors, cooking and sewing and Callie worked outdoors” (Bossmann 5 Sept. 2007).

Moving to Troutdale, Miss Callie and Du took an apartment above the First National Bank of Troutdale, where Du worked as a teller and Callie worked part-time from 1922-1932. The couple had three more children, Warren Fields, Carolyn Joy (my mother), and Sherwood Grayson. For a while Callie’s aunt Josie who was very ill stayed and was cared for by Miss Callie as well, in the small apartment above the bank (Bossmann 1 May 2007). The building though dilapidated still stands in Main Street, Troutdale.

My mother remembers that life in the late twenties was the age of flappers and the family had home brew in the basement. “ ... The 20s were wild no matter where you went – flappers, jazz, parties, booze, flirting, money” (Bossmann 1 May 2007). Mainly though, life in Troutdale was peaceful, interesting, and rich in nature. Next door to the bank was Mr. Phipps’ American Café, replete with fresh hot coffee, candy, and egg custard. Neighbors had the luxury of fresh fruit and vegetables the year round because Mr. Felix Pasley, a truck driver, traveled to Florida in the winter and brought back fresh produce to the town. Troutdale had a rooming house owned by Miss Layne and her little dog Cricket on Main Street (Bossmann 1 May 2007). Passengers from the train stayed there, and when the circus came to town, the children gathered to watch the acrobats unload equipment. Certain Troutdale families, including Miss Callie’s, housed the music teacher, so she could give private lessons during the year.

Troutdale was the first town in Grayson County to have electricity provided by a huge turbine power station. Every home had electricity. Troutdale’s small businesses included “hardware... produce... photograph gallery, ice cream shops, a grist mill, milliner, theatre, hotels, livery stable, doctors, dentists, lawyers, its own power company, soda pop factory, and newspaper The Troutdale News” (Fields et al). According to my mother even gypsies came through town, selling pots and pans to anybody who would buy them. Troutdale’s churches and school were thriving. They sponsored oyster suppers and dances on hardwood floors. My mother exclaimed, “We had everything, including home brew [during prohibition]” (Bossmann 1 May 2007). Miss Callie’s brood “went as a family” to the Methodist Episcopal Church Southern. Miss Callie not only took care of her own family, Aunt Josie, at home (all of Josie’s children had died), and Grandma Lindy on the Sugar Grove farm, but Callie also belonged to the Zeta Social Service Organization concerned with family health and safety issues and often visited families in the mountains (Bossmann 5 Sept. 2007).

Miss Callie also served as a part-time bank teller in the First National Bank downstairs from her family’s apartment. Willy Harliss and his older sister Darcy, who have lived in Troutdale for eighty years, remember that Callie worked at the First National Bank in Troutdale until it failed in 1932 (Harliss). During that time my grandmother’s roles were many and life was good. Awhile before the bank failed, Miss Callie’s family moved up the hill to the white house owned by the Greer family. My mother recalls, “We just had a great time, living up there on the hill” (Bossmann 1 May 2007). The blue framed house was roomy and had an exquisite lattice porch. But times soon began to change, as the Great Depression reared up.

At this time, Troutdale’s main industry was lumber, which dominated the town’s resources and production. Willy Harliss said of this industry: “See, the railroad come

from Nearing and went to Fairwood. It hauled logs and people. When they cut the timber out up there, up there that big mountain, they soon took the railroad up...and those men that took the railroad, the ties up [included] my brother-in-law and his brother and Daddy fer ten and a half cents an hour that was back in the early twenties... That was good money. They bought their groceries with it” (Harliss). Even though the lumber industry brought jobs, it stripped the area of timber and precious soil. The “... logging train, it hauled millions of feet of lumber utterly denuding some of Virginia’s most scenic virgin forests,” (Williams) according to Virginia author and educator Robert F. Williams. The lumber business thrived until around 1924 when the land was “timbered out and the lumber companies closed. As roads, autos, and trucks improved, passenger and freight traffic on the Marion and Rye Railroad declined to the point of no profits and the tracks were removed in 1934” (“Town of Troutdale” 118). Willy Harliss reported that after the lumber companies left, “I’ll tell ya ... people worked for five cents an hour ... and all this road going ... up to Pine Mountain ... and here [Marion to Sugar Grove] was built by a wheel barrow, pick, and a shovel In 1932, this new road 16.... it was a dirt road ... they redone the road and hard topped it in the thirties” (Harliss).

Other events included the failure of both the Troutdale Chair Manufacturing Company and the Troutdale Furniture Manufacturing Company: “[both] ... had received a large order from the Cuban government for their products. Both firms had to borrow heavily to finance the transactions. A serious sugar crop failure occurred in Cuba [in the late 1920’s] and the orders were cancelled” (“Town of Troutdale”). Journalist Sue Greer of *The Plow* interviewed Miss Callie in 1977. According to Greer, Miss Callie revealed that “the town had gone ‘down to the bottom’” (11) in the first years following the failure of the First National Bank of Troutdale and a fire which destroyed the furniture factories. Greer reports Miss Callie’s observation: “Many folks had lost all they had ... and many others moved ...” (11). Miss Callie expressed that people were not paying taxes and the town was having difficulty paying its debts incurred for civic improvements such as sidewalks (11).

Life in Troutdale became tenuous and, in 1930, the town was threatened with extinction by a movement to dissolve the town charter. Miss Callie and others realized that some people appeared to be interested only in personal profit and had little interest in maintaining Troutdale’s charter status. The stage was set for the 1930 mayoral election in Troutdale. Some parties including my grandmother and Du wanted to make certain that those who voted had the right to do so. (At that time, a poll tax was supposed to determine voter eligibility – a tax Miss Callie believed in because she thought that voting was a privilege that should show a citizen upheld the standard of taxation and representation. Some would disagree, including my mother, but at the time special interests groups focused on private rights tried to control elections and not pay taxes). An official roll call was taken, and it was discovered that Callie – a pro-Charterite - was eligible and one of her opponents was not because he had not paid his taxes. A contingent of pro-Charterites came to the bank and asked Callie to run. She agreed to do so. “She became the standard bearer for those in the community who wanted to make sure that the town remained an incorporated unit” (11).

But since Miss Callie was not slated on the official mayoral ballot, she had to run as a write-in candidate. Author Sherwood Anderson owned *The Marion Democrat* at the time. In his regular column “What Say!” he reported this pre-election drama. “As

everyone knows Mr. and Mrs. Bill [Du and Miss Callie] run the bank over there. They are both popular figures in this town's life. Before the election there was some question as to whether Troutdale was to continue to be a town at all..." (8). Anderson reiterates how Troutdale "has been in a pretty discouraging fight..." (8) in spite of past economic boom. What remains poignant in Anderson's commentary as he relates hard times with my grandmother's electoral success is his keen observation of what defines mountain people. "I myself believe there is no people anywhere more misunderstood than these mountain people. Why they are as fine independent hard working people as walk. Give them your friendship and you'll get back friendship you can depend upon" (8). Anderson continues to report that some folks in the town "... wanted to quit, lay down" (8) and give up on Troutdale, a scenario accentuating pre-mayoral election events, as Anderson aptly named the race "Town or Anti-town."

Miss Callie's supporters discovered she had to be a write-in candidate, a darkhorse at that, and the town's registering proposition dished out a snag when only 31 citizens were eligible to vote, but Miss Callie "got 17 of the eligible 31 votes and the whole town party went into office with her" (8). Post-election accolades went out to my grandmother in hopes that Troutdale's economic and civic status would improve. Miss Callie's victory not only marked the first successful election of a woman mayor in Virginia, for it is noted that Elsie Bunn was elected recorder and treasurer and two other women, Ms Felix Pasley and Mrs. Joe Wright served as council members (8). Willy Harliss remembers hearing about the elections: "[Miss Callie] was the first [woman] mayor here in Troutdale ... They said she was the first woman mayor in the United States, I don't know ... that's what I heard ... It was in a write-up about one time ... in the Marion paper I think" (Harliss). The ascendancy of the "town crowd," which worked to try to sustain Troutdale, saw to it that taxes were paid. A mayor's court was resurrected and the town was lifted out of debt by the time my grandmother left office. Greer notes that "Miss Callie also made sure that the council met regularly...The detailed recording of financial records which had fallen by the wayside began again..." (11).

I remember my grandmother described the revised mayor's court to me as one that considered using something other than jail time, so people could stay in their community while serving their sentences and not have to be transported to Independence, Virginia, the county seat, ten miles away. She would often assign people a civic work detail. She frequently dealt with young men accused of swearing and drunkenness, and she would talk sternly with them about straightening up and then assign an alternative sentence, civic in nature. (Wright 4 June 1980). Being harsh was not my grandmother's intention - being fair minded and just was. Willie Harliss remembers that "she was a real nice old lady" but related a different twist on a person assigned such civic duty in Troutdale, after appearing before Miss Callie in court. Harliss recalls, "...this young boy got drunk here and she made him - she was mayor - and made him go out there and work on the road going up the hill, by Long's Hill it used to be called ... he said he went out there and worked a little while and took off and got drunk again ... he drank a lot the poor guy did and I felt sorry for him. I 'member that. That was in the early thirties" (Harliss). Fortunately, Miss Callie "did not have to hold court very often because it [Troutdale] was a good town, with good people" (Greer 8). My grandmother also attended to business affairs including resurrecting the town of Troutdale's official stationery. Back then, it was acceptable to write personal notes on it, and Callie

corresponded with Sherwood Anderson, thanking him for sending his namesake Sherwood Wright, my youngest uncle, such a finely inscribed silver baby cup in honor of his birthday (Wright 1 Oct. 1931). Perhaps one would think Miss Callie to be showing off, an act not in her nature. The family often visited and corresponded with Mr. Anderson, particularly my grandfather who attended to Anderson's business needs.

The Depression continued to take its toll on businesses everywhere, including Troutdale, and when the National Bank of Troutdale closed – the euphemism was “consolidated” – Miss Callie and her family moved to Marion to find work, where Du and Callie worked at the Bank of Marion, along with maintaining Sugar Grove Homestead, its two horses Pat and Robin, cattle, six children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Willy Harliss again remembers Callie's years at the Bank of Marion: “Miss Callie and him and she worked over there in the Bank of Marion for I bet you thirty years or close to it ... She just about run the bank, I'd say, ‘till it growed... they got branches all around ... Here [in Troutdale] is where Miss Callie started, right down here in this ol' building” (Harliss). I thought it interesting that Miss Callie encouraged her Troutdale neighbors to bank in Marion, and she gave them personal service. Willie Harliss remembers, “I went to her ... I liked to talk to her” (Harliss).

Forced to retire in 1968, Miss Callie continued to farm until she could no longer travel up and down the mountain. She also took care of my schizophrenic aunt before she was confined to the Marion mental hospital. Callie and Du took in roomers in the house in Marion, and one of them included the famous Houston Astros pitcher Nolan Ryan who was a young and very homesick Texas rookie who played for the Appalachian League Marion Mets in 1967. Later, after Du died in 1972, Callie lived alone. All her children and the grandson she raised had been scattered by the Second World War and modern times. They found work in Baltimore, Radford, and Dayton, Ohio. My mother's journey north began in 1942, much to the chagrin of my grandfather who refused to drive Callie and my mother to the train station. So Callie put my mother, aged 17, on a bus to West Virginia Wesleyan in Buckhannon to study trigonometry and aerodynamic nomenclature for six weeks and she was sent on up north to serve as a mathematician's assistant at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, for the remainder of the war. There my mother stayed and met my father, a tool designer, married him and raised three daughters.

During the closing years of her long and eventful life, Callie found comfort in her United Methodist Women's Circle, her town garden, her rocking chair, civic duties with Slemp Cemetery, storytelling, and her neighbors, who watched over her because she never traveled more than the distance to and from Sugar Grove. Leaving 6 children, 14 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren, Miss Callie died on May 10, 1986 at the age of 92 but not before insisting that the democratic and not the republican-run funeral home in Marion make all the arrangements. She is buried in the Sugar Grove Slemp Cemetery where she pointed out to me one early summer evening, “[t]here is always a nice breeze blowing.”

In years past, I often wondered why my intelligent and observant grandmother was somewhat ornery and such a “stay put” person. But people born in them never really leave the mountains, particularly those that find great value in the hidden beauties, community, simplicity, independence, faith, just folk, good will, and the lands that surround them. I discovered my grandmother's role as mayor in a town that deserved defending represents only one of the many strengths she possessed as a mountain woman

who reveled quietly in daily life and its tasks. She was a woman of the earth who knew she would “cross Jordan” when she left for the promise above, and my sisters and I have come to appreciate the legacy she left to us.

Today Troutdale is still a town, and boasts a mayor, town manager, city council, medical facility, post office, churches, shops, and the town serves as a peaceful home to many artisans and commuters and as a quiet respite to those travelers hiking the Appalachian Trail. As we remember Miss Callie and Troutdale, my sisters and I realized that Sherwood Anderson spoke the truth about her town: “Quiet. Majestic. Honest...” The experience does not disappoint if getting away from the rat race is what you’re after” (Vandevanter 29). I think my grandmother put it most aptly when she said, “Why leave heaven if you live there?”

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RADICAL MOTHERS: WOMEN'S ACTIVISM IN THE PAINT CREEK – CABIN CREEK STRIKE OF 1912

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Abstract

On April 18 1912, began a long and violent struggle for unionization in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. It was known as the Paint Creek – Cabin Creek strike and lasted for a little over one year. This was the first major coal strike in the state and it was a costly action both financially and in human lives. The historiography has focused primarily upon the clashes between coal miners and the owners during the unrest. Although overlooked in the historiography, women were involved in this strike in a variety of ways. The purpose of this essay is to explore the types of activism and justifications the women of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek used to work in solidarity with the miners during the strike.

On April 18 1912, began a long and violent struggle for unionization in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Approximately 7,500 union and non-union miners joined together in collective action.¹ It was known as the Paint Creek – Cabin Creek strike and lasted for a little over one year. This was the first major coal strike in the state and it was a costly action both financially and in human lives. The historiography has focused primarily upon the clashes between coal miners and the owners during the unrest. Although overlooked in the historiography, women were involved in this strike in a variety of ways. The purpose of this essay is to explore the types of activism and justifications the women of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek used to work in solidarity with the miners during the strike.

The exploitation of the coal deposits of southern West Virginia began with a new line on the Norfolk and Western Railway. In 1883, the Norfolk and Western started shipping coal from Tazewell County.² This transportation revolution made access to natural resources economically feasible in the previously remote region. Southern West Virginia dramatically changed with industrialization.

The structure of society itself shifted from self-sustaining, agricultural villages to dependant industrial towns. Waller in her study on the Tug Valley noted:

In 1850 more than two-thirds of Pike and Logan county households owned their own farms. But even the one-third of household heads who reported no landholdings do not represent a pauper class...Such households were part of their parents' domestic economy until such time as the children obtained their own land. Thus most residents owned or could soon expect to own small, self-sufficient farms of 30 to 35 cultivated acres and 300 acres of "unimproved" land, often mountainsides too steep for anything but hunting or perhaps grazing cattle.¹

This situation radically changed with the rampant land speculation of the timber and coal companies, who were not above shady dealings in order to increase their wealth. In 1884, the West Virginia Tax Commission warned that the region could, “pass into the hands of persons who do not live here and care nothing for our State except to pocket the treasures which lie buried in our hills.”ⁱⁱ The Commission feared that once these resources were used up, these entrepreneurs would leave and that West Virginians would be left, “poor, helpless, and destitute.”ⁱⁱⁱ

These businessmen also desired a tractable, labor force and the company towns were designed around this concept. In addition to the dispossessed West Virginians, the companies also recruited workers from the African American communities in the southern United States and white ethnics from impoverished areas of Europe. The coal operators advertised high wages and affordable housing. Unfortunately, the promised higher wages, paid in scrip, did not go very far with the over-inflated prices charged at the company store. Additionally, the homes were poorly constructed, typically without any amenities, such as electricity and running water. Miner’s wives spent a good part of their workday hauling water from rivers and streams.^{iv}

The work in the mines for the men was extremely dangerous. According to the West Virginia archives, the state “fell far behind other major coal-producing states in regulating mining conditions. Between 1890 and 1912, West Virginia had a higher death rate than any other state.”^v Miners saw their earnings reduced because they had to rent their equipment from the company. The widespread process of cribbing also diminished their wages. Former West Virginia Attorney General Lee described that, “from the beginning coal was brought from the interior of the mines in small cars designed to hold a specified weight of coal. But the companies “cribbed” their miners by building a “crib” or frame around the top of these cars until they held from 500 to 1,000 pounds more coal than the workers were paid for mining.”^{vi} The checkweighman also reduced the pay of the miners if he judged there to be any rocks or slate mixed into the crib load.^{vii} This process known as docking was extremely subjective and miners were frequently defrauded of the scrip they risked their lives to earn.

Even with the horrible living and working conditions, unionization did not come easily to southern West Virginia. The first attempt by the United Mine Worker’s of America (UMW) to establish unions in the area floundered in 1892. After many more unsuccessful ventures, a small victory took place in 1902 in the mines in the Kanawha-New River area. At this time some prominent families in Charleston independently owned the mines, so labor organization was a painstaking process. The largest operator in this region was the Carbon Fuel Company.^{viii} In response to the small success of the UMW, the mine owners created in 1903 the Kanawha County Coal Operators Association. Its purpose was to halt further unionization in the area. One method that the operators used was to hire Baldwin-Felts detectives to intimidate union organizers. This proved to be a fairly effective organization since the UMW withdrew organizers from the area and by 1912 lost much of its influence on the Kanawha-New River coalfield.

A wage differential was the impetus for the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike and renewed activity by the UMW. Unionized miners at Paint Creek were paid two and a half cents less per ton of coal than the other unionized miners in the area. During negotiation of a new contract, the miners desired an increase to make up the difference. The operators rejected this proposal. In response the miners at Paint Creek began their strike April 18,

1912. Non-unionized miners at nearby Cabin Creek also went out on strike. Their demands included:

- (a) That the operators accept and recognize the union; (b) that the miners' right to free speech and peaceable assembly be restored; (c) that 'black-listing' discharged workers be stopped; (d) that compulsory trading at company stores be ended; (e) that 'cribbing' be discontinued, and that 2,000 pounds of mined coal constitute a ton; (f) that scales be installed at all mines to weigh the tonnage of the miners; (g) that miners be allowed to employ their own check-weighmen to check against the weights found by company weighmen, as provided by law; and (h) that the two check-weighmen determine all 'docking' penalties.^{ix}

These developments encouraged the UMW, who quickly sent organizers, including "Mother" Mary Harris Jones, to the region. The Socialist Party of America also sent advisors. The mine owners of Paint Creek revoked recognition of the union and imported in 300 Baldwin-Felts detectives to use techniques that had proved successful before in breaking strikes; violence and intimidation.^x

Women were not protected from harassment because of their sex. Since the women of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek were deeply involved with the strike, the coal operators viewed these women as an appropriate target. In retaliation to the efforts to organize, the owners ordered the Baldwin-Felts detectives to forcibly evict the workers and their families from their company homes, destroyed their furniture, and barred them from all mining company properties. These families made makeshift homes, some living in tents and caves, on private property. They could not purchase food from the company store and the children could not attend school because they no longer lived in the school district. The UMW pledged their support by sending in organizers and required additional funds from its membership to help out the people of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek.^{xi} The population was approximately 35,000 around these two creeks.^{xii} The UMW raised \$600,000 to finance the strike and provide for the material needs, like food and clothing, of the miners and their families.^{xiii}

The coal operators quickly recruited strikebreakers from New York and the South with promises in their ads of, "Steady employment at good wages in the mines of West Virginia, No strikes, free transportation."^{xiv} Trains under heavy protection of the mine guards and detectives brought them in. One of the first forms of activism that striking women engaged in was to meet these trains. They would ask the travelers where they were going and question anyone new to the camps. If the strangers were strikebreakers, the women would attempt to educate them about the reasons for the strike and encourage them as fellow workers to go back home. With UMW funds, the women would give food to the strikebreakers' children and purchase train tickets to help them leave. A 1912 article in the Huntington Advocate noted that, "it was the women who did much of the work in dissuading scabs from coming into the strike."^{xv} Some of these strikebreakers, discouraged by the working conditions and how they were kept under guard at the mining camps also ended up joining the strike.^{xvi}

If kindness did not work as a technique, striking women also had other tactics. For the strikebreakers that stayed in the area to work, the women would go onto company property to form a picket line to block these workers from entering the mines. They

typically carried brooms to beat the strikebreakers and mine guards, buckets filled with excrement to throw on them, and tin-pan noisemakers to scare the mine mules.^{xvii} When these women were arrested they would have their children brought to the jail to stay with them. As good mothers they could not expect their husbands to care for the children as well as they and most importantly it was a strategy in that “the more babies they took to jail with them and kept awake and crying all night by their singing, the shorter the length of time the women would spend behind bars.”^{xviii}

One assumption in using women in the picket lines was that guards would not resort to use violence on them. This theory quickly proved to be unfounded. There were reports that some women, including pregnant women, were brutally assaulted by the guards when they went onto company property. This violence included not only beatings but also rape.^{xix} The first month and a half of the strike was relatively peaceful but on June 5, the guards wounded several people when they attacked one of the tent colonies. Union leader Fred Mooney related that, “every day or two they would sneak into the hills and sprinkle the canvass cities with showers of leaden pellets, caring not if their bullets hit men, women, or children.”^{xx} Women were armed and fought alongside their miners to protect the colonies.^{xxi} Miners also led retaliation raids against the guards. In his work, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, Corbin related that:

Armed and organized, the striking miners unleashed their rage upon the Baldwin-Felts guards. They hid in the hills and sniped at individual guards, and squads of miners attacked companies of Baldwin-Felts men. In one instance, miners surrounded a camp of guards during the night, cleared away the underbrush, and silently waited till dawn. When the guards awoke and began preparing breakfast, the miners opened fire, killing thirteen to fifteen of them.^{xxii}

Unlike earlier strikes in West Virginia, the miners responded to violence with violence. Governor Glasscock called out the militia and three times put the area under martial law during the life of the strike. Initially the people of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek welcomed the military, in hopes that this would stop the violence of the guards and bring peace.^{xxiii} Unfortunately, the miners were viewed by most in the government as those responsible for disturbing the peace. Corbin described that, ‘instructed by the governor and their commanding officers, the soldiers arrested at least 200 striking miners and their leaders without warrants and detained them in makeshift jails, called bullpens, without the right of habeas corpus.’^{xxiv} “Mother Jones” was arrested for attempting to incite a riot because she was reading a subversive piece to the strikers, the Declaration of Independence.^{xxv} Jones stated, “the tragedy is the young boys who arrested me had no knowledge of that immortal document, and no conception of its meaning.”^{xxvi} When the militia would leave the strike zone, the frustration of the people of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek would come to the surface again.

Frustrated miners had other targets besides the guards. Corbin noted that, “the miners blew up the tipples of operating mines and the trains carrying coal that had been mined by scabs. They met trains that were bringing strikebreakers to the strike zone and forced the potential scabs to evacuate – an action that often pitted black strikers against black strikebreakers and immigrant strikers against immigrant strikebreakers.”^{xxvii} Over the life of the strike, various estimates exist as to the death toll during the struggle. One

estimate put the number of dead guards at 150.^{xxviii} There was not any accounting of the number of strikers killed or the deaths of their wives and children due to violence.

Fortunately, a few of the stories exist about how some women were directly involved in one of the battles, the “Bull Moose Special” incident. The coal operators had converted a train, called the “Bull Moose Special” by adding protective steel plates, machine guns, rifles, and ammunition. On the evening of February 7, 1913, seven law officers, fourteen mine guards, and the coal operator, Quinn Morton, left from Charleston on this train and traveled to the Paint Creek region. These men claimed that they were going there to serve a warrant. Morton had sworn one out on a “John Doe” for inciting a riot. Former West Virginia Attorney General Howard Lee related that:

As the darkened train moved into the tent village of the strikers at Holly Grove, which was strung out along both sides of the railroad track, the machine guns began spitting fire and death; and the coal operator and his mine guards opened fire with high-powered rifles from the car windows. Sleeping miners and their families awoke in the middle of the night to hear bullets ripping through their tents and shacks.^{xxix}

Many in the village were injured and one miner, Cesco Estep, was killed in this attack. His widow, Maud Estep, testified before the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Education and Labor on June 13, 1913 about the conditions in the Paint Creek District. She was asked about what her husband was doing before he was shot. Estep replied:

He was in the house when the train commenced shooting down on the other side. We were all in the house sitting there carrying on and talking. We heard the train come shooting, and he hollered for us to go to the cellar, and he went out the front door – him and some more boys that were in there; they ran out of the front door, and I went through the kitchen way, and I never got any farther than the kitchen door; we were all trying to get to the cellar. He was standing right at the corner of the cellar near the kitchen door where I was standing hollering for me to go and get into the cellar. It was so dark that I could just see the bulk of him. It scared me so – and I had a little one in my arms – that I could not go any further.^{xxx}

None of the Senators asked Estep if she joined some of the miners in shooting back at the train. However, according to some eyewitnesses, when Cesco was murdered, Maud picked up his gun, yelled, “Make every shot count boys, do not waste your ammunition. My man is dead; his head is shot off. Give them hell,” and she began shooting toward the train.^{xxxi} It was not unusual for women of the strike zone to react with such fury when attacked.

There was a fear that the “Bull Moose” would come back to harm more people in the tent communities. According to Sheriff Bonner Hill in testimony before the U.S. Senate, somebody in the train did want to go back, although he refused to name him,^{xxxii} and give Holly Grove another round, but that because there were women and children in those tents that he wouldn’t allow it.^{xxxiii} Another person who wouldn’t allow it was Sarah Blizzard. “Ma” Blizzard, as her neighbors called her, was very supportive of the union. Her husband, Timothy Blizzard was an early organizer and her son Bill Blizzard became UMW President of District 17. Ma Blizzard took it upon herself to make sure that the “Bull Moose” didn’t hurt any more families. She recalled,

Yes sir, that old Bull Moose would parade up and down and shoot up the woods, where the miners were, so me and three other women decided one night to put an end to that. We slipped out after dark, took crowbars, and pried up the rails and rolled them down the hillside. The next morning, when the Bull Moose came along, it didn't go on to Leewood like it was supposed to. The men inside the train cussed and fumed and we stood on the side laughing at them.^{xxxiv}

Historian Wertheimer noted that, "each mining town had its own "mother" who mobilized the women in support of the men in the mines. Some of them, like Mother Blizzard of Cabin Creek, West Virginia, never left the communities in which they lived, but they exerted a powerful influence."^{xxxv}

This influence extended to the language that women used in describing the reasons for their activism. One woman married to a Paint Creek miner explained, "all that we ask is that our children be given a chance."^{xxxvi} Their goals were related to protecting their families and making a better life for their children. In a *New York Call* article of March 21, 1913, while she was in jail "Mother" Jones stated, "I am an old woman and have not long to live. I will die gladly, because it will cause millions to think of the misery of all you poor workers, your miserable wives and children who are denied the comforts and blessings that you should have in this great country."^{xxxvii} Women of the strike zone understood that the companies treated them and their families as being expendable and unworthy of a better life. There was a sense of class solidarity and unity between the miners and their wives. They were going to fight together against the mining companies. Organizer Mooney related, "I am incapable of describing the courage displayed by the heroic women who passed through the strikes."^{xxxviii}

After the "Bull Moose" incident, violence continued to escalate until the new governor, Henry Hatfield came to power on March 4th. He released over thirty individuals under martial law from the jails. According to the West Virginia archives,

On April 14, Hatfield issued a series of terms for settlement of the strike, including a nine-hour work day (already in effect elsewhere in the state), the right to shop in stores other than those owned by the company, the right to elect union checkweighmen, and the elimination of discrimination against union miners. On April 25, he ordered striking miners to accept his terms or face deportation from the state. Paint Creek miners accepted the contract while those on Cabin Creek remained on strike. The settlement failed to answer the two primary grievances: the right to organize and the removal of mine guards. After additional violence on Cabin Creek, that strike was settled toward the end of July. The only gain was the removal of Baldwin-Felts detectives as mine guards from both Paint and Cabin Creeks.^{xxxix}

Although the strike was not very successful, this does not diminish the fact that working-class men and women worked together in solidarity. Throughout the life of this strike, women had played an integral part and understood their activities, even violence, as within the realm of domesticity.

The cult of domesticity developed within the middle class as a result of industrialization, particularly after 1800 in the United States. With the shift in the economy from agricultural to industrial, the middle-class family had to adapt in its

functions. The ideal arrangement was that of separate spheres, that of a male breadwinner and a female homemaker. Husbands were to be involved in the world while wives were to provide a haven from that world. This shift from a rural economy to an industrial economy also impacted other expectations of gender roles. Woloch has noted that, “according to the doctrine of sphere, character traits, like social roles, were gender specific. Men were expected to be competitive, assertive, individualistic, and materialistic; the woman at home needed a compensatory set of character traits. Dependent and affectionate, she was pious, pure, gentle, nurturant, benevolent, and sacrificing”.^{xi} Gradually, some middle-class women expanded their domestic sphere to include reforming social evils. Women in urban areas extended their missionary work to “visiting” those less fortunate. Woloch explains that during the 19th century, “*Visiting* was the crucial work in voluntary benevolence. It led out of the home and into the homes of others. As women’s associations multiplied, they developed more specialized goals – such as care for orphans, widows, or destitute mothers. They also created a variety of institutions, such as schools, asylums, refuges, and workshops, to aid and redeem the worthy poor.”^{xli} To an extent it was believed that “mothering” provided by such middle-class role models could positively influence these needy populations.

The structure of these organizations varied, some were auxiliaries to male associations while others were independent. Many of these groups were religious yet there were also some examples of those that became secular organizations, such as the Boston Seaman’s Aid Society.^{xlii} By the 1830s female workers were a common sight in orphanages, prisons, and other charitable organizations. Woloch notes “voluntary benevolence capitalized on the gender consciousness associated with woman’s sphere” and “voluntary benevolence promoted the visiting not only of homes but of public institutions – first almshouses, and then asylums, hospitals, jails. The increase of such institutions provided a new social space to which benevolent women gained entry.”^{xliii}

It is evident that the expansion of social roles for lower class women during the Paint Creek – Cabin Creek strike had also been influenced by the concept of separate spheres. There was a traditional division of labor within coal mining communities, unlike their counterparts in England, U.S. women did not work in the mines. The primary responsibility for women of the coalfields was to take care of the home and children. Waldron Merithew has argued that, “coal women’s political ideology was based in the notion that femaleness made men and women different but this was cultural, not biological.”^{xliv} Due to their cultural role as mother, women expanded the activities of their sphere during the strike. Tactics such as taking children to jail with them, or carrying domestic tools like buckets and brooms to picket lines, all highlighted their roles as mothers. Even when these mothers advocated violence, an atypical feminine character trait according to the separate spheres view, from the rhetoric commonly used during this conflict, the women were simply trying to make a better life for their children. “Mother” Jones claimed, “It is freedom or death, and your children will be free, we are not going to leave a slave class to the coming generation.”^{xlv}

As the above quote hints, there were also distinctions between middle-class and working-class women. Not only at Paint Creek and Cabin Creek but also at other strikes, such as Lawrence, Waldron Merithew noted that women, “reinterpreted their maternal roles in ways that took into consideration class and gender oppression.”^{xlvi} Although women played integral parts during the strike, they were not officially recognized or

organized by the UMW. In a 1934 speech, John Lewis remarked, “you will remember that men who are members of the United Mine Workers will continue to do the fighting for the organization...while the women remain at home”^{xlvi} and it was not until the 1970s that women became equal members in the union due to their new role as miners. Because of how gender construction interacted with the class structure, the women of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek were accepted as voluntary helpers to the cause but not as organized groups. Unfortunately, this was not uncommon. In 1898, the UMW welcomed the assistance of women in the strike against Central Competitive Field in Illinois. Like the women of West Virginia, they were on the front lines, but not recognized. By 1901, in Illinois some mining women had “formulated a Maternal Mission that criticized the collusion between capitalism and patriarchy and demanded a place in the organizations of their male comrades.”^{xlvi} As has already been noted, it would be a very long time coming before the UMW accepted women into its ranks and prior to that they rejected a women’s auxiliary over and over again. This is a stark contrast to middle-class women’s auxiliaries and voluntary associations that although not welcomed by all, were at least tolerated.

Another distinction was that middle-class women for the most part in these organizations were not critical of capitalism and the class structure. Women of the coalfields did understand that they faced very different economic and political realities from middle-class women that covered little common ground. The women of the coalfields had men in their lives that due to financial situations worked in dangerous and demoralizing conditions. In a memoir by Jack Rogers in the *West Virginia Review*, he noted,

Not a week passed but that tragedy touched some home. When a housewife chanced to glance through the window and see a group of miners bearing an improvised stretcher between them, she spread the alarm. In a twinkling women were on the porches, wiping hands on aprons, calling to one another...anxious distraught women and children, uncertain of the fate of their loved ones, demanded to know the identity of the victim.^{xlix}

This was not an experience that many middle-class women had to face. Because mining families realized that they were expendable in the capitalist system, there existed among them a critique of the class system and the means of production that did not exist among the middle-class.

It was their experiences that radicalized the working-class women of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek and expanded their view of their proper roles as women during this strike. The traditional concept of mothering influenced the forms of their activism. The women of the coalfields picketed, gave speeches, went to jail, attacked mine guards, and sacrificed to better the lives of their children. Though some of their tactics may have appeared unusual for the time period, the conditions in the camps radicalized the concept of the woman’s sphere.

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WHO ARE THE WOMEN OF THE OLD STONE?

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Abstract

The three-story sandstone structure on Dolphin's Ridge (Buckskin Township, Ross County, Ohio) was built during the first decade of the 19th century by a settler from Loudon County, Virginia, and still serves as a residence for the presenter's family. This presentation will attempt to identify some of the women who have managed the households and families throughout the history of the house and consider their lives on the edge of Appalachia within historical and cultural contexts.

Introduction

On a flat-top ridge in Buckskin Township, Ross County, Ohio, stands a two-hundred-year-old sandstone house, the context of this exploration: the stories of the women who have lived within it. Beyond the edge of the ridge to the west and north stretch the plains of south central Ohio, but to the east and south roll endless Appalachian foothills. These ridges resemble those around Leesburg and Hillsborough in Loudon County, Virginia, where Daniel Hixon (1771-1848) was born five years before the American Revolution. As young men, Daniel and his brothers Timothy, David, and Joseph, uneasy with their father's holding of slaves, set out for the Virginia Military District. Timothy and Daniel bought land surveyed and deeded by Duncan McArthur in western Ross County on adjoining hilltops, later known as "Turkey Ridge" and "Dolphin's Ridge" respectively. David and Joseph journeyed beyond the foothills to the plains of neighboring Highland County, Ohio, where the new towns of Leesburg and Hillsboro would appear to honor their namesakes back home in Loudon County, Virginia.

Little wonder that, in 1809, Daniel Hixon purchased, for \$400, the 200-acre hilltop adjoining Robert Cunningham's land on the north slope of Dolphin's Ridge since he had married Cunningham's daughter Margaret (Peggy) just two years before, the same year as the establishment of Buckskin Township. Sadly, Peggy died, perhaps in childbirth, within a year of their marriage, January 17, 1808, at age 24. Little is recorded about Peggy Cunningham Hixon, but the site of her parents' log home is still identifiable near Cunningham Falls—both within the present-day boundaries of the same property as the stone house. One of many unanswered questions is whether the three-story stone structure (with no original windows on the first two floors) had been built as a safe haven for travelers *before* Daniel Hixon purchased the land in 1809; whether Daniel completed its construction for his first love, Peggy; whether they lived perhaps in her father's log structure or another nearby while the construction began; or whether he had the stone house built for his second wife, Rebecca Devoss, whom he married in 1812.

That the old stone, constructed in the Virginia vernacular architectural tradition (Cokonougher 8-9) was built by the first or early second decade of the century is fairly safe speculation. While a clear and specific date has yet to be discovered on or within the structure, several nearly identical stone houses on neighboring ridges have been clearly documented with

dates that range from 1793 to 1816. Although the first tax record specifically mentioning a stone house on the property is in 1820, it was apparently common for landowners, during the early statehood period, not to report structures to avoid taxes. Moreover, the 1809 deed from Duncan McArthur to Daniel Hixon mentions “improvements” and “appurtenances,” so the existence of structures at that date is not an unreasonable speculation. Another speculation, based on Roman numerals carved on the attic beams, is that the fortress may have been completed as early as 1793, the year before the Treaty of Greenville theoretically ended hostilities between settlers and Native Americans.

Rebecca Devoss Hixon (1792-1850, OS 1812-1848)

Regardless of the exact date that the house was completed, however, perhaps the safest assumption is that Rebecca Devoss Hixon may have been the first matriarch of the Old Stone. Rebecca was born in 1792 in Kentucky, so she was twenty-one years younger than Daniel when they married on June 25, 1812 (she, twenty, and Daniel, forty-one). That same year, Daniel enlisted to serve in the War of 1812 but returned within three months. Rebecca’s father, Joseph Devoss, and her brother had migrated with the family from Kentucky to operate a stone quarry along the Buckskin Township (Ross County) side of Paint Creek near Greenfield (on the Highland County side). The Devoss family also built a sandstone house near the quarry, inviting speculation about a possible connection with stonework. While the material for Daniel’s three-story stone house had been quarried from his own property just three-hundred yards from the site on Dolphin’s Ridge, Hixon may have consulted the Devosses, less than ten miles away, and perhaps met the young woman who would become his second wife. It is also possible that Daniel had met the Devoss family in Kentucky before they migrated since his uncle Timothy Hixon had received a Revolutionary War land grant of a thousand acres in Fleming County, Kentucky, between Maysville (then called Limestone) and present-day Morehead. Fleming County records show that Timothy’s nephews from Ross and Highland Counties, Ohio, had served as executors in the sale of his Kentucky land since he had chosen to stay in Loudon County, Virginia.

Nevertheless, Daniel and Rebecca lived together in the old stone long enough to raise seven children. What were those thirty-six years of marriage and motherhood on the frontier like for Rebecca Hixon? One historian, writing a century later describes (in quaint Victorian style) this countryside known in 1807 as Buckskin Township:

“The township was originally covered with excellent timber and was one of the finest hunting grounds in the county. Game of all kinds known in the country were here to be found in almost exhaustless supply. The heavy growth of timber and convenient hills afforded ample cover and protection, and many are the “bear stories” and daring feats of frontier life remembered of the early pioneers of Buckskin. They were brought in daily contact with bears, wolves, wildcats and panthers, and these were formidable enemies to the young domestic animals about the settlers’ cabins, as well as dangerous companions in the lonely wilderness. Deer and wild turkeys were also to be found in great numbers, and these, with an occasional “bear steak,” furnished the principal meat supply, to which the epicurean of today would have no occasion to object. Venomous reptiles, and especially the dreaded rattlesnake, were among the enemies of modern civilization, and

these found an abiding place in the rocks and hills, and added their share to the discomforts and perils of pioneer life.

The settlement of the township began under the same discouraging circumstances which prevailed everywhere in districts remote from the natural thoroughfares. The meager supplies of actual necessities had to be brought long distances, through trackless forests, infested with dangerous opponents of civilization. The pack horse was the faithful friend who was the means of connecting the pioneers with the outside world, carrying to them the few articles of commerce which this simple mode of living demanded. Ammunition, meal and salt were the three articles most required, but the first was always an absolute necessity. The periodical trips to the 'base of supplies were always fraught with peril, both to the lonely travelers who made them and to the helpless and defenseless ones who were left behind. Several days were required to go to the Ohio and return with a cargo of supplies." (Bennett)

Although a few stage coaches entered Ohio in 1815, a regular route from Chillicothe through Greenfield to Lebanon didn't begin operation until 1818. Even then, a local historian wrote, "The early coaches were extremely crude and uncomfortable," with up to eight people and their baggage, limited to ten pounds, stowed under the seats. "The remaining space was filled with mail bags and merchandise.... Roads were filled with ruts and gullies and mudholes. The coaches were not provided with springs. A trip in a stage coach was one long series of bumps and jolts" (Harris, 53). Chillicothe, the first capital of Ohio, had been laid out in 1796 by Nathaniel Massie, and the *Scioto Gazette* began publication in 1800. One of the major events recorded during Rebecca's life in the Old Stone was an 1827 epidemic of malaria in the entire southern part of the state. "The Gazette stated that there were 'but few families that were not afflicted.'" (Bennett). August 1831 saw the opening of the canal from Lake Erie to the Ohio River for transportation of merchandise and passengers, but at that time there was still no railroad (Bennett).

Given the difficult conditions for pioneer women in the Appalachians, surviving multiple childbirths and living conditions to reach any longevity at all seems unlikely. Yet, Rebecca's sister-in-law, Catherine, married to Daniel's brother David, rode horseback from Loudon County, Virginia, to Ohio during the winter of 1811-1812, along with her husband and two small children--in the late stages of a pregnancy. They stopped in Ross County (not far from her brother-in-law's home) to deliver her son William on January 11, 1812. They eventually moved to Highland County, and Catherine, after bearing seven of her own children and serving as stepmother to five more from David's first marriage, lived to be 102 years old. She and her husband are buried in the Dunkard Cemetery in Leesburg, Ohio, having started their journey west decades before from Leesburg, Virginia (Fuller).

While Rebecca and Daniel lived in the stone house, they saw the birth of eight children, the second, Elsa/Elsie (1814-1889), only one year after her brother John Ellsworth (1813-1878). The fourth and fifth children, William and Sarah, were both born within the calendar year of 1822. William married Matilda Cox (1825-1880) on Sept 14, 1843; Margaret married John Melson, and her sister Sarah much later married John's brother Samuel Melson (January 19, 1861); David, born three years after William and Sarah, married Mary Jane Peterson on July 29,

1846; Rebecca, born in 1836, married James Hester on September 14, 1843; and the baby, Nancy Agnes (1830-1905), married Thomas Garland Miller on June 1, 1847, the year before her father's death and three years before her mother's. Neither lived to see the marriage of 39-year-old Sarah to John Melson, and Elsie apparently never married. Most of the children settled on the Hixon land close to the stone house to raise their families. Daniel, to whom most records refer as a farmer, died on March 21, 1848, at the age of 77, and Rebecca followed him on May 10, 1850, only fifty-eight years old. Both are buried in the South Salem Cemetery in Buckskin Township.

Mary McGinnis Hixson (1816-1857, OS 1849-1857)

The year after Daniel Hixon's death and the year before Rebecca's, an 1849 deed records the \$2500 sale of 238 acres to their son John Ellsworth Hixon (1813-1878) by his siblings and spouses: David and Mary Jane Peterson Hixon, William and Matilda Cox Hixon, Thomas and Nancy Hixon Miller, John and Margaret Hixon Melson, Elsa Hixon, and Sarah Hixon. At that point, John was thirty-six and married to the former Mary McGinnis, then thirty-three.

Mary's father was probably James McGinnis, Jr., a Pennsylvania shoemaker renowned locally as a trapper and hunter, who had moved to Ross County in 1801, two years before statehood. He, like Daniel Hixon, was a soldier in 1812. His son, the Rev. Alexander McGinnis, was a minister in the Methodist Episcopal denomination and built the third house in the newly laid out town of South Salem, just two and a half miles from his sister's hilltop stone home. The Salem Academy, an institution of higher education to prepare teachers and ministers for the frontier, had been established in 1842, and the town was built around it in 1846 (Bennett).

The local churches and the Academy shaped the culture of the developing society in which John and Mary McGinnis Hixon lived. According to the Ohio Historical Society, "Presbyterian minister Hugh Stewart Fullerton asked his congregation in 1841: 'Shall we endeavor to form an academy to provide better educational advantages to the young citizens of this remote community?'" The stone for the remaining building from the Salem Academy came from a quarry south of Greenfield. The institution's "primary purpose was to prepare ministers and teachers for the West. Professor J.A. Lowes served as principal during the 'golden age' of the academy from 1848 to 1858." Eventually, during the Civil War, attendance "dropped significantly...while many students served in the Union Army." By the time the academy closed in 1907, more than 1,500 students "including three U.S. congressmen and Governor Joseph B. Foraker" had received instruction here." Now, the building serves as a community center, having been added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 (Ohio Historical Society).

The 1850 census for John Ellsworth Hixon, Sr. and his wife Mary shows five daughters, ranging from twelve to three years of age and a one-year-old son (six children born within eleven years), along with nineteen-year-old Henry Brown, probably a farm laborer. This crop of Hixons growing up in the Old Stone included Samantha (1842), Nancy J. (1844), Elizabeth, named for Mary's mother (1846), Rebecca, named for John's mother (1849), and John Peter (1850).

Mary lived only eight years in the stone house, but that period saw its share of difficulties on the frontier. One historian writes that, in the summer of 1849, cholera appeared in Ross County, and the governor proclaimed days of prayer and fasting (Bennett). Mary died on August

1, 1857, at the age of 41, leaving Peter, who was only seven; Rebecca, eight; Elizabeth, eleven; Nancy, thirteen; Samantha, fifteen; and Sarah, nineteen. Three months later, on November 5, 1857, "Ross County was devastated by a cyclone...." Buildings were demolished...trees were torn up by the roots; fences leveled or carried entirely away; horses attached to vehicles were picked up in the road, carried several hundred feet and dropped uninjured; a horse and rider were picked up and safely landed across a fence. Much stock was killed and injured and many houses were entirely destroyed. The storm was most disastrous in the western part of the county...traversing the counties of Ross and Highland with great destruction" (Bennett). Mary's family, however, were safe in the shelter of the stone house.

Nancy McGinnis Hixon (b. 1826, OS 1858-1875)

Even with the help of teenaged daughters, caring for his young family was probably more than John Hixon could manage alone. Just five months after Mary's death, on Jan 26, 1858, he married Mary's younger sister, Nancy, then 32. John was 45. John and Nancy added three more children: Mary Belle (1859), John Ellsworth, Jr. (1863), and Mary Mae (1877). The 1860 census shows not only Nancy, age 34, in the household but also Elizabeth McGinnis, the children's maternal grandmother, then 55, no doubt a big help with seven children, five of her first daughter's and two of her second daughter's. The eighth, John Ellsworth, Jr., would be added three years later, during the Civil war.

These were difficult financial years for farmers in the region. Bennett writes that, following the "depression of business during the panic of 1857," just as the county began to recover from the economic trouble, the county's "season of prosperity was checked to some extent by the disastrous frost of June 4, 1859" resulting in "devastation wrought on the new growing crops, fruits and vegetables" and "buckwheat became the staple product of the farms for that year...." This event might explain why several of the later deeds refer to the "*old* orchard" as a landmark. Life in the stone house was very difficult, as one source describes:

"The trip to the Ohio Country in the late eighteenth century was very difficult for women. Many of them had no choice but to follow their husbands to the frontier.... Because the wagons had very limited capacity, only absolute necessities were packed for the journey. Sentimental objects, like family heirlooms, china, and most furniture, had to be left behind....Once these women arrived in Ohio they faced numerous challenges.... The climate could be very harsh, and settlers also dealt with annoying insects and dangerous animals. Having left friends and family behind in the East, many women faced homesickness and isolation. In the early years of settlement, women experienced many psychological challenges as well. Commonly, there were no close neighbors or nearby towns to provide much social interaction. Men were away from the house for long hours, working in the fields or hunting and leaving their wives with no adult companionship. There were numerous accounts of loneliness, depression, and even occasional suicides.... In addition to taking care of the home and raising children, frontier women provided medical care, raised livestock, grew vegetable gardens to supplement the family's diet, made butter, candles, and soap, preserved food for the winter months, and made their family's clothing, often of cloth that they wove themselves....In some

cases, a widowed woman continued to farm her family's land after her husband's death, often with only her children's help....Women often provided hospitality for strangers traveling through Ohio. When public hotels or taverns were not available, settlers opened their homes to travelers, providing both meals and a place to sleep.... Life for women during Ohio's early history was both challenging and dangerous. Women died in accidents and from complications from childbirth. Women did not have a very long life expectancy—most did not live to see their fortieth birthday during the frontier era. ("Women")

1878-1909

John Ellsworth Hixon, Sr. died in 1878 at the age of 66 of what county records show to be "consumption," or tuberculosis, an illness that was said to be characteristic of the Hixon family (Gant). Corroborating evidence of the propensity includes death records of several individuals as well as the remainder of a glass, sanatorium-like structure that apparently existed on the lower west hillside of the property. All that was left of the structure by the early 20th century were the fragments of three-quarter-inch glass panels that had afforded the sun therapy prescribed by doctors of the era. My uncle recalls the boyish pleasure of finding panes of the thick glass near an old well and breaking them on rocks nearby (Crusie, Robert). The location of John Hixon's death is recorded as South Salem, the creek-bottom village where the plains meet the Appalachians, two and a half miles from the stone house out on the hill. Whether he was still living in the house at the time of his death and whether Nancy outlived him or preceded him in death has not yet been determined at the time of this writing.

This period of life in the Old Stone poses a challenge for research, but it does invite a few assumptions. An 1860 map of Buckskin Township clearly shows the property still in the name of John Hixon, Daniel's son, but an 1875 map shows part of it as belonging to the "Hixon Hrs," or heirs. Other parts of the property indicate ownership by an "A. Wilson" (Ashley Wilson) and "P. Dolphin," Peter Dolphin (1834-1905). Apparently it was during this period that the ridge officially took on Dolphin's last name. He and his wife Mary (1846-1895) are buried in the St. Joseph's Cemetery in Greenfield, Ohio, along with their two children, William H. (1865-1915) and an infant, Catherine, who didn't survive her first year (1874).

The Dolphin family, however, probably did not occupy the Old Stone during this period. On walks through the back fields and woods on the east end of the property, my father would occasionally point out the location of the old Dolphin house and indicate that the frame structure had later been moved nearer the stone house to be used as a farm shed. It is more likely that the stone house belonged to Ashley Wilson at that time, but the proliferation of deeds for small parcels during this period suggests that the Hixon heirs were dividing and selling the property, perhaps because of financial hard times. Occasionally, a parcel that had been sold by a Hixon heir or in-law would be re-acquired by the same person or a relative. Names that recur are DeVoss, Miller, Gray, Kerr, all with in-law connections. There seems to be some attempt by the family to re-group the original property. At one point, however, a couple of successful businessmen from the flatland around Lyndon, a bustling station on the B&O Railroad three or four miles away, owned a large portion of the ridge, but not for very long. From 1902 to 1909, a Charles W. Miller had collected several large parcels; he and his wife Margaret probably

occupied the house for a while. Whether Charles is a descendant of Daniel Hixon's daughter Nancy Agnes and her husband, Thomas Garland Miller, has not yet been corroborated, but their grandson, the son of Thomas D. Miller, lived adjacent to the property as late as the 1970's.

Cora Hoopingarner Crusie (1867-1922, OS 1909-1922)

In the same year that Rebecca Devoss Hixon was born in Kentucky (1792), Jacob Hoopingarner was born in Pennsylvania. Both families migrated to Ohio, Rebecca's to Highland County in the south central region and Jacob's to Tuscarawas County in the northeastern region. Jacob Hoopingarner (1792-1878), a Lutheran farmer, married Sarah Baltzly (1797-1878), whose grandparents had emigrated from Switzerland to Pennsylvania. In 1818, Sarah and Jacob gave birth to Thomas Michael, who, on January 2, 1840, married Amanda Agnes Kilgore. Michael and Amanda Hoopingarner had nine children, the youngest of whom was Cora Evelyn, born on May 20, 1867. On June 18, 1885, about a month after her 18th birthday and a few days before his 21st birthday, Cora married John Adam Kruse (1863-1936). His family lived just around the corner from the Hoopingarners on Glynwood Road in Wapakoneta, Ohio.

John Adam's parents (Michael and Maria Sauer Kruse, listed in the 1880 census as originating from Elsas, the German spelling of Alsace, and Prussia, respectively) had immigrated to this country from the Alsace-Lorraine region on the border of France and Germany, territory historically contested by the two countries. Although most Alsatians today speak French, the Kruse family considered themselves German and spoke German.

At some point after the 1880 federal census, the spelling of Adam and Cora's last name became anglicized to *Crusie*, and a year and a half after their marriage, their first son, Austin Jay, was born on January 28, 1887. Within the next eleven years, Cora would match the number of children her mother had born, nine in all. Cora Mae was born in 1888, Jessie Leona in 1891, Norma Dale in 1893, Lillian Elizabeth in 1896, Howard Hobson in 1898, Ruth Esther in 1902, Clyde Warren in 1904, and Pauline Louella in 1908. The family lived in a modest but attractive frame house on Black Hoof Street in Wapakoneta, Auglaize County. When his youngest sister Pauline was born, Austin was twenty-one and helping with his father's *dray* business, or hauling with *draft* or *draught* horses. Because the older girls were already 20, 17, and 15, family speculation suggests that Cora may have been concerned about the distractions of city life and suitors and became eager to move her family to a quieter rural setting.

Although we are unsure just how she found it, she undoubtedly did discover a remote property 130 miles away in western Ross County. Adding to the mystery of the motivation for the difficult move is the fact that the house on the hilltop property was a 100-year-old stone structure with no windows on the first or second floors, one entrance, and an internal trap door to the cellar. With only two large rooms on each of the first two floors and a one-room cellar and attic, sleeping quarters for a family of eleven would have been a challenge, and the interior would have been extremely dark and musty from the six fireplaces that provided the only light and heat. Why would a mother relinquish an attractive frame house "in town" for this less-than-cozy dwelling? Was it really to protect her children from the dangers of city life? The South Salem Academy had closed two years before, so educational advantages were less likely. Did

Adam wish for more land for his dream of an orchard and nursery business? Was it the attraction of the potentially lucrative syrup production operation on the sugar-maple-covered hillsides?

Whatever the motivation, one startling detail is clear. Cora was apparently in charge of the real estate transaction, an unusual occurrence at the turn of the last century. Moreover, it was not a single transaction but two separate land purchases to piece back together plots that had passed out of Hixon family possession and through several other hands over the previous half-century. The largest tract, 152 acres, including the stone house, she purchased from Charles W. and Margaret Miller for a sum of \$7800, according to an April 11, 1909 deed. A February 27, 1911, deed indicates her acquisition of another 30 acres from Albert and Sarah C. Morgan for \$1 and “other valuable considerations,” bringing the total in her name to 184 acres. Adam, Cora, and baby Pauline traveled from Wapakoneta by train on the new DT&I (opened in 1904) to Greenfield where they would transfer to the B&O to Lyndon, three miles from their new home. Austin, the eldest, drove the wagons from Wapakoneta, with the household items and the rest of his siblings aboard.

And so, Cora Hoopingarner Crusie became a woman of Appalachia, a woman of the “old stone.” The first few months in the house, before Adam, Austin, and the Fleming brothers from Wapakoneta could cut a new lane and finish the construction of the wooden wings, were difficult. Family stories passed down recount the infestation of the house with bedbugs and other insects. What a welcome addition must have been the two large bedrooms upstairs and the kitchen and parlor downstairs, not to mention the porches on each wing where the family could enjoy the perpetual breeze on a hot summer evening. In addition to the construction of the wings, the men cut windows in the first and second floors of the stone house and doors to access the wings, no small task since the solid stone walls are eighteen inches thick on the first floor and a foot thick on the second. The cut for an external cellar entrance was made through thirty-six inches of stone. During her brief thirteen years of life in the stone house, Cora’s family made many improvements to the farm and the dwelling. Carbide gas lights were installed in the house for illumination, the maple sugar camp and other crops grew into successful production, orchards and gardens, as well as a variety of livestock, provided food and income for the family.

In spite of the exhausting work for a farm wife with such a large family, Cora’s character traits, according to one of her grand-daughters, included a take-charge personality that “you didn’t fool with”; what she said was “the law.” Adam was a bit gentler and easy-going personality. Nevertheless, Cora was jovial, good-natured, and “devilish,” meaning that she enjoyed perpetrating practical jokes. Her grand-daughter recalls that children wouldn’t want to be sitting idly around when Grandma took bread out of the oven because she would likely set the hot pan right on their laps! (Blazer)

Occasionally a stylish woman herself, seen in some photographs in a work dress and apron but in others with a fancy hat and fur, Cora apparently didn’t completely discourage her children from socializing and developing cultural skills. The girls liked to entertain and participate in community events and celebrations. One in particular, Lillian, the middle child of the nine, was well-read, educated, and an accomplished musician. She was called upon as a pianist to accompany many community performances. But perhaps the child most resembling her relentless, driving, hard work was her eldest son, Austin, to whom Cora passed the property. The

deed was signed on April 24, 1922, just seven months before her untimely death. She had developed hypertension; the treatment ordered by the physician at the time was bloodletting, so she would go periodically to be bled. For the last few months of her life, Cora and Adam traded houses with her son Austin and his wife and moved to a small frame dwelling in South Salem, a couple of miles away. Her health continued to fail until a stroke took her life at the age of just 55.

Mary Katherine Bennett Crusie (1892-1955, OS 1920-1950)

Early stone houses in the Appalachian foothills of western Ross County were in the family tree of Mary Katherine Bennett, so it seems fitting that she found her way to one when she married Austin Jay Crusie in 1911. Two of Mary's great-great-grandfathers, Daniel Pricer (1765-1825) and Christian Benner (1764-1840), among the earliest pioneers in the area, had both built stone houses on ridge tops very near Daniel Hixon's on Dolphin's Ridge, and both houses are similar Virginia vernacular architecture. The Pricer stone house, on Pricer's Ridge, which stood not more than one mile "as the crow flies" and not more than three around the ridge roads from the Hixon house, was built in the first decade of the 19th century, as was the Benner House, about seven miles away.

Daniel Pricer and his Swiss-born wife, Sophia Grubb, lived in Pennsylvania before settling in Buckskin Township. Their son, Henry Pricer (1793-1879) married Elizabeth Benner (1795-1858), the daughter of Christian and Mary Ann Houck Benner. Christian Benner was a prominent Bainbridge, Ohio, businessman from Germany who also came to Ohio after living in Pennsylvania. His stone house on Benner Hill still stands as a residence north of Bainbridge on State Route 41; it was built in 1803 and closely resembles the Dolphin's Ridge stone house. Benner's wife, Mary Anne, was born in Alsace-Lorraine, Germany, the same region from which Michael Kruse's family emigrated.

From the union of Henry Pricer and Elizabeth Benner came their daughter Katherine in 1818. Katherine's son by her second husband, George Bennett, was Joseph Lincoln Bennett (1863-1946), Mary Katherine Bennett Crusie's father. The stone houses in which her great-great-grandfathers lived, therefore, are not the only coincidence in Mary Katherine's life. Her ancestors came from the same small region of Germany as those of Austin Crusie, her husband.

Mary's father, "Linc" Bennett, lived in South Salem and served as the village lamplighter. He was known as a pleasant, easy-going handyman and painter. His wife, Anna Rose Sampson Bennett was born Feb 13, 1861, and they married on Jan 28, 1890. In addition to Mary Katherine, Linc and Anna Rose had four other children: Margaret Bae, who married James Gray; Mabel, who married Earl Mercer; Robert Maxwell (Max), who married Marie Shoemaker; and Gladys, who remained unmarried most of her life but eventually married James Gray, her oldest sister's husband. Anna Rose was bed-ridden for the last fourteen years of her life, crippled with arthritis. She died on Feb 10, 1942, at the age of 81. Her youngest daughter, Mary's sister Gladys, had stayed in their parents' home to care for them and her deceased sister's three sons. Later in life, she married the boys' father, James Gray. Mary and Gladys had a very close relationship throughout their lives. After the death of their parents, Gladys, still single, spent some time in Mary and Austin's home, and after Austin died, the sisters lived together again until Mary's death.

When Mary Katherine Bennett married Austin Crusie on June 22, 1911, he had been in the community only two years. She, on the other hand, had deep roots in Buckskin Township and had lived in the busy little town of South Salem all her life. Her in-laws, Cora and Adam were living in the Old Stone on Dolphin's Ridge, where the newlyweds moved into the summer kitchen next to the house. A few years after the birth of their first child and only daughter, Romaine, on August 2, 1912, the couple moved to a little frame house on Beath Lane, just over the north hillside from the home place. In 1915, Austin purchased a small house on lot number 58 in South Salem from Evelyn Wilson. Three years later, their first son, Eugene Jae, was born on June 6, 1918.

When Eugene was a toddler, his grandmother Cora was growing very ill, and the house and farm were too much for her and Adam. Austin was already doing most of the farming and business operations, so the family decided that the younger couple would trade houses with the older couple. Mary returned to "The Hill," as it came to be called, but this time to live in the Old Stone. Their second son, Richard Lee, came along in January of 1924, Robert Franklin in July of 1925, and Carl William (Billy) in February of 1930. In July of 1931, Austin purchased an additional 13 acres from Michael and Nettie J. Hinnigan, bringing the farm closer to the original 200 acres purchased by Daniel Hixon from Duncan McArthur in 1807.

Before she was married, Mary, a graduate of Buckskin High School, had worked for the Wright family in nearby Lyndon, scrubbing floors daily on her hands and knees and doing other housekeeping. A daughter-in-law recalls that Mary, who also kept a very clean house of her own, nevertheless preferred to enjoy her home and not be a slave to housekeeping. She enjoyed getting out and traveling and would be ready to collect food she had preserved for a picnic. She was a faithful member of the South Salem Methodist Church, but would still take in a Sunday afternoon movie with her son and daughter-in-law—if and only if she had gone to church that morning (Crusie, Marian).

Even though improvements had been made in the house, Mary's daughter Romaine remembers the ongoing battle with bedbugs their first few years in the stone house, a nightmare she still experiences at the age of 95. Six years older than the next child, Romaine assisted in the births of one or two of her brothers and remembers how hard and willingly her mother worked. She remembers helping her mother take food down over the south hillside to the sugar camp and sitting by the fire to picnic with the men. A favorite meal was chicken and dumplings; another was beans and dumplings. There were always many mouths to feed in Mary's house, oftentimes without notice. Austin hired young men in the neighborhood to help with the maple syrup operation, and other farmers would often be on the place during thrashing. Mary fed them all, including her own family and their cousins, whose mother had died young and found an open home with Mary and Austin. Visitors or anyone passing by would receive an invitation from Austin to stay for a meal, and Mary never objected but cheerfully complied (Crusie, Mildred).

Eventually, Mary's father-in-law, Adam, came back to the stone house to live with them until his death in 1936. Through the 1930s, in spite of hard economic times, Mary's family grew and prospered on the farm, their labors bringing rewards and expansion. Austin added a new sugar house, two new barns and a substantial chicken house. Her firstborn, Romaine, graduated

from Buckskin high school in 1932 and attended business college in Columbus before marrying Raymond (Del) Blazer in 1933. The couple lived in Greenfield where Romaine went to work for a physician, Dr. Glenn. By 1940, the boys were growing into fine young men with the promise of continuing Austin's dream and ambitions for developing the family farm and related businesses. All seemed to be going well, but Mary's quiet, reserved character and deep religious faith would be tested one November morning in 1941.

Bob, 15, and Billy, 11, finished their chores quickly in order to go hunting. It was just a few days before Thanksgiving, and the boys wanted to provide their share of the family meal. They trekked into the woods on the south hillside until they came to a fence. As Billy climbed the fence with his rifle in his hand, he didn't consider the way the barrel was pointing. The trigger caught on a wire, and the gun discharged into his neck just under his chin. The bullet lodged in his brain. His brother Bob was alone to figure out what to do because the men and his older brothers were helping out at a neighbor's farm. He carried Billy to the closest neighbor's house to plead for help, but the only potential transportation was a car that hadn't been run for years. The owner was sure it wouldn't start, but it did and allowed them to get to where his father was working. When the family was able to get Billy to Greenfield, his sister Romaine, who was working in Dr. Glenn's office, was there to share in the realization of the devastating loss.

Billy, the baby of the family, had been everyone's joy. He was full of life and always on the run. He never walked through gate when he could jump it. Because he was always underfoot and tagging along, his father loved to tease him, and the older brothers enjoyed riling him when they played Rook. He was the child who made everyone smile, but smiles in the old stone house stopped when Billy's life ended. On the evening his body was laid out in the parlor on the lower floor of the south wooden wing his father and grandfather had built over thirty years before, my mother recalls that Austin walked through the room and past the casket with the milk bucket on his way to the barn, saying, "Come on, Billy. It's time to go do the milking." Mary suffered in stoic silence, struggling to accept God's will.

In the next few years, things went from bad to worse. The beginning of the war meant that Dick and Bob would be sent overseas in harm's way. On March 1, 1943, Dick became a paratrooper with an outfit that eventually moved from northern Africa to Italy, and, on a jump into Anzio beachhead on January 30 the next year, was hit with shrapnel. On February 17, 1944, the field hospital in which he was recovering was bombed, and Dick lost his life at the age of 20. When the family received the news, Bob was stationed in Texas but was able to get home for just one night, a night through which the whole family stayed up grieving together. Because Dick had been the son most interested in farming, Austin felt not only the emotional but the material loss of his second son. Mary, who characteristically devoted herself to comforting others, wrote the following poem:

In Memory of Richard

When Uncle Sam called you to serve,
The days were lonesome and blue—
We prayed to God in Heaven
To bring you safely through,

To return you to home and loved ones,
To Dad and Mother who loved you so well.
But from the hands of a German,
Wounded and bleeding you fell—
You fought and died for your nation,
The land that gave you birth
Dear old America, you loved her,
The best on this great earth—
As we sit at home alone thinking
Of you, our joy and pride,
We know that you are peacefully sleeping
With other brave men at your side.
We were proud to know you were no slacker
And you did your work with a will
Out on the field of battle
Just as you did at home on the hill—
As other boys return to their loved ones
We will rejoice with them and say,
“Not our will you do not return,
But Dear Lord, have thine own way”—
It breaks our hearts and we sorrow
Because you can not come to us again,
But we hope to meet you in Heaven
Where there is no war, no sorrow, no pain.

Dick was buried in a military cemetery in Italy, but Austin wouldn't rest until he was brought home. The bureaucracy and paperwork were overwhelming, but four and a half years later, in August of 1948, Austin and Mary buried him beside his little brother in the South Salem Cemetery. By the time Austin achieved the closure he so fiercely fought for, his health had failed from prolonged high blood pressure and stress. He could no longer keep up the farm, and the only solution seemed to be the same one the family had turned to just twenty years before.

Mildred Lenora Hall Crusie (b. 1920, OS 1950-2005)

Austin and Mary's son Eugene had been refused enlistment for service in World War II because of a hereditary condition presenting itself early in his life, hypertension. It had killed his grandmother prematurely, and it was doing the same to his father. Gene had always been an intense young man, usually quiet, sometimes brooding, keeping his own counsel but harboring a spirit and temper that could be powerful once incited. Like his mother's father, Linc Bennett, he was only about 5'8" tall, but he possessed a physical strength and determination well beyond his stature. A clever boy with a sharp intellect, especially in mathematics, he had little desire for farming, except for an interest in developing a plant nursery and orchard like his grandfather Adam. His lack of devotion to the farm was demonstrated when, during the depression, in the late thirties, he took off with some buddies to hop freight trains out West, not once, but two seasons, to work in the apple harvest in the Wenatchee Valley in Washington. The life of the hobo appealed to his adventurous wanderlust. Mary and Austin would occasionally hear from

him when he sent money back home to make up for his missed labor, but they would go for months sometimes not knowing if he was alive or dead. Between times of escaping to the West, Gene would return to the farm and to the girl he had met at a high school track meet. Both of them were athletes, Gene in track and field at Buckskin, and the pretty blonde from the rival Twin High School in basketball and cheerleading. She was patient, and he was “worth waiting for,” as Millie puts it. His dark hair and bright white teeth intrigued her, when she could get him to smile. The rambler apparently made his peace with settling down eventually, and on a bright afternoon of October 7, 1939, while his parents were on a trip to Columbus, Gene went down to Bourneville, picked her up and drove over to Rev. Glen Mills home on Potts Hill Road outside of Bainbridge to get married. They then drove back to the “The Hill” to do the feeding and milking, and when his parents returned, they discovered that they had a new daughter-in-law.

Mildred Lenora Hall was born in Bainbridge on October 25, 1920, the third surviving child of David Edwin Hall (1892-1956) and Grace Mae Everhart Hall (1894-1969). She joined her older sister, Helen (later married to Hugh Arrington), and her brother, Harry (later married to Naomi Trainer). Dave was a lineman for the Chillicothe Telephone Company, and Grace taught for a while at the Moxley School near Fruitdale. When they moved to Bourneville, Grace became the switchboard operator for the telephone company.

Dave and Grace were evidence that opposites attract. While both were fun-loving and jovial, Grace, a portly woman, was deeply religious and active in the Methodist Church and child evangelism. Dave, who stood about 6’5” tall, was a bit of a rounder, given to drinking and playing not-so-pious fiddle tunes as well as practical jokes. Grace was not a housekeeper by nature, preferring to spend her time reading the Bible, preparing to teach Sunday School, and writing news columns for the *Chillicothe Gazette*. She was also quite a fine poet. Consequently, their daughter, Mildred, cultivated some contrasting qualities. She served as her mother’s housekeeper, a fierce combatant against disorder and dirt, and she developed a strong aversion to her father’s vices: playing cards and drinking alcohol. Her mother, a woman of profound faith in the providence of God, had little interest in worldly pleasures (other than some good fried chicken occasionally) or in the tedious facts of life and love. Consequently, given her distaste for her father’s pastimes, Mildred may have reached adulthood slightly naïve by others’ standards. Perhaps that freshness, along with her striking blond hair and blue eyes, is what drew the bashful Buckskin boy back home to her, in spite of his love for the West.

Perhaps another attraction was Millie’s preeminent practical skills suiting her for the life of a farm wife and mother. As soon as she graduated from high school, Mildred went to work honing her housekeeping skills in the homes of wealthy families in Chillicothe, a job she did not mind giving up to marry Gene. It wasn’t the cleaning and cooking that bothered her as much as the condescension of those who assumed superiority. Her conviction that poverty is nothing to be ashamed of—but slothfulness is (“Water’s free, and soap’s cheap” was a favorite saying)—led her to believe that hard work, morality, and self-respect can justify the most unworthy. While her Christian upbringing taught her the error of pride, ironically, the ostensible lack of pride gradually became a matter of pride, and she developed a tireless, crusading disposition for decency and cleanliness of all kinds. Perhaps Gene subconsciously sensed that, if he were ever to relent to domestication, he would need a partner equal to the challenge, a partner with the same mettle his father had for taming the farm and the old stone house.

Nevertheless, when the young couple returned to The Hill on the evening of October 7, 1939, I'm sure that both considered it a temporary step. After all, their wedding night and those to follow for several months were spent in Gene's boyhood bedroom next to his little brothers'. While the living arrangement was a bit awkward, Mildred remembers those days with Mary, her mother-in-law, with great joy. Mary, like her own mother, was a deeply religious and kind woman, but unlike Grace, Mary shared and nurtured Mildred's skills in homemaking, cooking, and entertaining. Although Mary had probably enjoyed the social life of South Salem, she seemed, to everyone who knew her, thoroughly content in her old stone house on the hill. That was one disposition her daughter-in-law did not develop.

Eventually, Gene's father bought them a little house in South Salem, and their first two children were born: Austin David, on January 9, 1941, and Rose Mary, on September 10, 1943. Those were the happiest years in Mildred's life. She loved the cottage in South Salem and the social life with neighboring young mothers. Then her father-in-law surprised her with a real estate trade that moved the young couple to Lyndon, where their third child, Daniel Lee, was born on February 6, 1946. Unable to enlist in the military, Gene had engaged in factory work, first at the American Pad and Textile Company in Greenfield and later at the API plant in Washington Court House. Following the deaths of two of his brothers, Gene's only remaining brother, Bob, returned from the war in 1946. His grueling service in the Battle of the Bulge had taken its toll on his interest in the farm, and with the ensuing ill health of their dad, Gene's future seemed to be taking shape.

The more Gene's path seemed to be pointing back to the farm, the more he tried other jobs and avocations, largely just to supplement income to support his growing young family. He took a correspondence course in refrigeration and another in taxidermy. He served as constable of Buckskin Township, as well as a township trustee who built and maintained roads. He delivered mail on the Lyndon rural route. And of course, he farmed for his dad. By 1950, when his dad could no longer work, Austin and Mary moved to Lyndon, and Millie and Gene returned to the stone house.

She cried all the way up the mile-long lane. She didn't want to give up life in the small town where she could walk to the grocery and the children could wait excitedly for the trains on the B&O to roar by, where she could see people and roads going somewhere. The lane up the hill seemed a literal and figurative dead-end to her--isolation. She remembers that Gene promised her that it wouldn't be permanent, that they would move back to town the first chance they had. She remembered that scenario, and she recounted that scenario, for the next fifty-five years.

During their first autumn in charge of The Hill, the fall of 1950, a dramatic incident corroborated Mildred's fears. In the middle of an early blizzard in November, Austin Jae Crusie, at the age of 63, died at the Lyndon residence. Drifts buried fences, and ice covered drifts. Livestock wandered unbounded across the frozen landscape. Roads, even in the flatlands, were impassable. Roads in the hills were impossible. Yet, Gene and Mildred had to be reached to attend his father's funeral. Crews of neighbors pitched in, attempting to cut through the snow and ice towering above vehicles and tractors. Eventually, they reached the ridge top and enabled Gene, Millie, Austin David, Rosie, and Danny to join the family and friends mourning Austin's

passing. That incident must have served as an emblem of the cold isolation that Mildred seemed to feel during most of her life on Dolphin's Ridge. To be sure, she knew some seasons of joy and moments of peace, but she always longed to return to the cottage in South Salem, lamenting more frequently in later years, "If I just had a little place in town."

In 1951, Mildred gave birth to the child who would become the fourth Crusie woman of the Old Stone--on May 20, the exact day, eighty-four years earlier, that the baby's great-grandmother Cora was born (the first Crusie woman of the Old Stone). Kathryn Mae was born in the first-floor, southwest corner of the original stone part of the house. Four years later, her grandmother Mary (the second Crusie woman of the Old Stone), passed away at 63, the same age of death as her husband, Austin.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, all four of Mildred and Gene's children enjoyed the benefits of life on the farm: the woods, the streams and falls, the livestock, the small but excellent township school, parents devoted to serving their Creator and ensuring the happiness and success of their children. It was a life of hard work but satisfaction. In order to provide for his family, Gene continued multiple jobs: operating a small general store in South Salem, delivering mail, making candles at a factory in Leesburg, and eventually becoming the Postmaster at the Lyndon Post Office. Money was scarce, but the family always ate well from the 700+ quarts of vegetables and fruit Mildred canned and stored in the cellar each summer and the milk, butter, eggs and meat produced on the farm. One thing we could always count on was that Mother would be there for us every day and every night. When the children went to college, Dad would sell a steer or two to pay tuition each semester. Given the opportunity, our parents would have excelled in college: Dad could have been a successful horticulturalist or mathematician, Mother, a psychologist or counselor; both were master teachers. They managed to see all four children earn masters degrees and enter the teaching profession.

Several ironies grace the third Crusie woman of the Old Stone, Mildred. She may have been the most reluctant of the women whose stories we know, but she is certainly the one with the greatest longevity, having lived there through her 85th year, alone for five years beyond the death of Gene in 1998. In those 55 years of co-existence, something of the Old Stone became her essence; she assimilated its strength, its endurance, its protective shelter, its unfathomable mysteries. In her 87th year of life, she has achieved what she always claimed she wanted, a "little place in town." The irony, of course, is that all she wishes now is to return to the stone house on the hill, as she does quite frequently, fondly recalling storms, both literal and metaphoric, she has weathered with her family there.

The stone house is a landmark; it is a museum; it is a stage. As a landmark, it has been a landlocked light house, a symbol of safe harbor, for two hundred years. As a museum, it conceals many more rooms than this visit can even begin to explore. Some are dimly lit; some are dark but deserve curious attention. As a stage, it has hosted countless scenes from many dramas, some unique, but most archetypal. In a 1916 Susan Glaspell play, "Trifles," about the lives of isolated farm women, a character observes: "I know how things can be--for women.... We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things--it's all just a different kind of the same thing." No matter how far apart historically, the women of the Old Stone have known this shared experience.

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WOMEN AS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN MID-19TH-CENTURY WHEELING

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Abstract

Women provided the best health care in mid-19th-century Wheeling, Virginia/West Virginia, during a time of professionalization in health care. The first nurses at Wheeling Hospital, in 1853, were the Sisters of St. Joseph. In 1860, Dr. Eliza Hughes, the first woman to earn a medical degree in what is now West Virginia, began her practice with her brother. During the Civil War, as the Sisters of St. Joseph cared for soldiers and prisoners, Hughes faced arrest for her Confederate sympathies and a lawsuit from another brother's business partner. After the war, Dr. Elizabeth French lectured and consulted on women's health.

The traditional image of women and medicine in nineteenth-century Appalachia is of midwives and folk remedies, of rural women concocting teas and poultices to treat their families. But, the Wheeling story was much more complex and a microcosm of many national developments related to women as health care providers. The histories of Catholicism in Wheeling, of women religious in the United States, of medicine as a profession, and of women's access to careers in medicine in the nineteenth century are also critical to this snapshot of women as health care providers in Wheeling.

Wheeling was a heavily industrialized city with a population of 11,400 in 1850, 14,100 in 1860, and 19,280 in 1870. The largest city in western Virginia before the Civil War, the largest city in West Virginia after the war, and the state's first capital, Wheeling was also the largest city in Appalachia south of Pittsburgh in 1860. With abundant wealth from the varied manufacturing and commercial enterprises, numerous doctors and some dentists, a county medical society, the Sisters of St. Joseph (SSJs) to provide nursing care at Wheeling Hospital after 1853, retail druggists and wholesale drug companies, and a city-appointed public health officer (Dr. James E. Reeves) by 1870, and easy access to the rest of the country by rail, road, and river, it was easy for Wheeling residents to have access to the best medical care available from resident or visiting practitioners. There were also more options for health care providers to practice in Wheeling.

The urban setting was critical. "The disparity between rural and urban health care has existed since colonial times," noted Richard Mulcahy in his introduction to the health section of *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. "This changed dramatically with the rise of modern medical science," when, between 1870 and 1900, "reforms in medical education and expanding scientific knowledge ushered in a new era in which illness was effectively treated." According to Sandra Barney, "Over a fifty-year period from roughly 1880 to 1930, the very definition of health-care delivery, as well as the composition of the constituency that delivered their care, underwent a major shift. Before the transformation of medicine in Appalachia, health care was delivered by a variety of locally situated, community-based healers." There were also "physicians who had acquired their medical knowledge through brief courses at the various regional medical colleges located in urban centers on the periphery of the mountain region." Back home, the doctors served "preceptorships under the direction of established physicians who themselves possessed little or no classroom or laboratory training."¹

The women most closely linked to traditional ideas about health care in Appalachia were the midwives, but these women were actually the hardest health care providers to find. There is no evidence of formal training for midwives in Wheeling or that any of those who worked there attended Samuel Gregory's school that he started in Boston in 1848 to train women as midwives.² A few midwives did advertise in the local newspaper. Mrs. Schotta, who described

herself as a *Asage femme* offered her professional services to the ladies of Wheeling and vicinity, in the practice of Midwifery and all other offices pertaining to the lying-in chamber; and that they may feel assured of her qualifications to attend all natural cases in her profession, she is gratified to say that she is permitted to refer to DR. WALTARS, of whose books and instructions she has availed herself from time to time.³ Mrs. Caroline Stammer, in 1868, advertised her prices moderate. Attention given in all cases.⁴ The only midwife identified in the 1870 census was Anna Geggler [sp?], a 45-year-old woman born in Switzerland and the head of her household.⁵

Other health care providers left better records. The SSJs were the first group of women to come to Wheeling to provide health care, and their story is linked to the growth of Catholicism in the area. Tricia Pyne noted that “The [Catholic] community founded in Wheeling was made up on settlers who would prove to be representative of the Catholics western Virginia would attract over the course of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries: recently arrived immigrants who were employed on the great public and private works or in search of labor.” Father Richard Vincent Whelan became the fifth resident priest in 1846. Most of the approximately 1,500 Catholics were German immigrants. On July 19, 1850, the Diocese of Wheeling was created to cover all of Virginia west of Maryland and the Allegheny Mountains, including what is now southwest Virginia. Whelan then became the Bishop of Wheeling.⁶ He remained as bishop until his death in 1874.

Although men were in the positions of authority, women religious played critical roles “in the shaping of Catholic culture and American life.” According to Carol Coburn and Martha Smith, understanding their importance can only come from examining gender, religion, and power within the convent culture and how nuns functioned within the church and within American society. The religious community is one of the oldest and least analyzed of women’s groups in the United States. As a woman-defined space and culture within the highly structured American Catholic Church, it provides an intriguing challenge to historians of women to expand our understanding of nineteenth-century women’s culture within a patriarchal setting that had the potential to exploit or co-opt women’s work and contributions.⁷

In Wheeling, the women religious lived in two communities, the cloistered nuns of the Order of Visitation Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Visitandines) and the SSJs, an order that was not cloistered and, therefore, the members were known more properly as sisters, although all used the honorific of “Sister” in their names.⁸ The Visitandines were teachers, so they are not included in this paper. The SSJs were founded in France in 1648, and the first ones came to the United States in 1836, arriving in St. Louis on March 25. Three of them left shortly for Cahokia, Illinois, and, on September 12, another three arrived in Carondelet, where they lived in a log cabin and set up a school. They soon started to care for orphans, both responsibilities they would assume when they went to Wheeling.⁹ They arrived at a particularly dangerous time in the history of American Catholicism for, just two years earlier, anti-Catholic rioters “plundered and burned” the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts.¹⁰

Sioban Nelson claimed that “in the United States a good proportion of these women were European.”¹¹ McNamara noted that “The needs of immigrant groups in America were largely answered by sisters from among their own ranks,” and the immigrant sisters in Wheeling did come from the same Irish and German backgrounds as the city’s other Catholic residents.¹² Some came from working-class backgrounds. Some from middle-class to upper-class backgrounds. Some entered religious life as young women, while others were widows. All were white and served white patients, although there were black religious orders in the United States at that time, including the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore in 1829.

From 1845 to 1860, the number of convents in America grew from 82 to 381, while the

number of nuns grew from 1,108 to 4,005.¹³ Some were raised in Roman Catholic families. Some were converts to Catholicism. Joseph G. Mannard noted that convents offered “American Catholic women . . . an option not available to Protestants—institutional religious life. Protestant women frequently recognized how a nunnery might offer women benefits not available elsewhere . . . —a refuge from marriage and the world, a release from the dangers and debilitations of continuous childbearing, a safeguard against economic deprivation, a support network of sisters, a commitment to social good.”¹⁴

All entered the religious life as postulants (their entrance date in the order’s records) and, after about a year, became novices (their reception date in the order’s records). They then received the habit of their order and their religious name. As novices, their training was under the direction of the mistress of novices. Then, usually about two years after becoming novices, they professed their vows and became full members of the order. They then had to renew their vows each year. Entering the community of women religious was a major event in a woman’s life. For example, in November 1858, Eliza Matthews professed her vows in what the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* called a “right interesting ceremony,” where the “proceedings were fraught with an imposingly grand interest which impressed all with reverence and admiration.” The service, when she received the name of Sr. Stanislaus, took place at the “Charity Hospital” [Wheeling Hospital]. Bishop Whelan presided at the high mass, the choir of St. James’s Cathedral sang, and “the Sisters of the order joined in rendering some excellent music.” Along with “quite a number of citizens,” the “invalids and orphan children” in the hospital also attended the service.¹⁵ Sr. Stanislaus became Mother Superior of the Wheeling SSJs on June 7, 1859.¹⁶

The women governed themselves, with a mother superior in charge. The place where the mother superior lived was known as the Mother House. Any place sisters lived was known as a convent. Lay or domestic professed sisters were less educated and worked as cooks, laundresses, and in other service capacities. Each community was “defined by its rule—a guide to the sister’s identity as a member of this community, and the charism (the special works such as nursing or care of the elderly) that the holy foundress had established the community to pursue.”¹⁷

The SSJs supported themselves through their teaching and their hospital, and through donations or dowries that novices brought with them.¹⁸ Therefore, “religious life was not about individuals but about communities of women. These women did not care for franchise or working conditions. They were on God’s mission, and their spiritual training enabled them to turn hardship and adversity into spiritual exercises in obedience and humility.”¹⁹

At the same time, the sisters’ private life was “more restrictive, perhaps, than that for any other women in America,” they could also claim “an expansive public role in education, health care, and social services—a role broader than that open to any but a handful of other women. Most nuns . . . were quite clearly working women, in the sense that they engaged in gainful employment outside the home. As teachers, nurses, charity workers, or administrators of convents, schools, and hospitals, many nuns were *de facto* career women. Though their work was a by-product of their primary religious calling . . . nuns nevertheless served as some of the earliest examples of women professionals” and were “pioneers for their sex.”²⁰

In Wheeling, the SSJs were under the jurisdiction of Bishop Whelan, who had a keen interest in the operation of the order. He was responsible for bringing them to Wheeling when he approached Dr. Simon Hullihen, who had operated a dispensary/infirmiry in Wheeling since 1835, to establish a hospital.²¹ By 1850, the infirmiry was no longer able to meet the demand for medical care, especially the demand from Wheeling’s poor. The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia granted a charter to this new Wheeling Hospital on March 12, 1850. The stockholders voted to buy Dr. Hullihen’s infirmiry at their first meeting on July 10, 1852, when the hospital actually became operational. They also then decided to invite the SSJs to

operate the hospital. This was the first hospital chartered by the legislature of Virginia in what would become West Virginia and the first hospital in the Ohio Valley.²² It also followed a pattern of establishing Catholic hospitals in the United States that dated from 1820.²³ The SSJs, then, were among the “vowed women,” a term Sioban Nelson uses to “speak collectively about those women who separated themselves from the rest of the world to live in a community according to a set of religious precepts,” who took their vows voluntarily and produced the “vowed labor . . . that built so much of the health care system that we take for granted today.” Indeed, “the work of the nursing nuns was part of and significant to, the broader goals of the Catholic apostolic mission.”²⁴ Wheeling Hospital was also part of a national trend, since more Catholic hospitals opened in the 1850s as “the Catholic hierarchy” moved to “counter Protestant efforts to proselytize Catholic immigrants and bar their own institutions to priests.”²⁵ In 1856, the Commonwealth of Virginia amended the hospital's charter to allow the sisters to care for homeless girls under the corporate title of Wheeling Hospital and Orphan Asylum.²⁶

Mother Celestine Pommerell was in charge of the monastery at Carondelet in 1853, when Bishop Whelan asked her to send sisters to Wheeling. Four women arrived in Wheeling on the *North America* steam boat on April 13, 1853, and two followed in May. Sr. Anastasia O'Brien, Sr. Alexis Spellicy, Sr. Sebastian Reis, and Sr. Agatha Guthrie (the April contingent) and Sr. Ligouri Leigh and Sr. Mary Agnes Spencer (the May pair) were under the leadership of Sr. Mary Agnes Spencer, whom Mother Celestine installed as superior of this new community. Mother Celestine even visited Wheeling with the May pair to install Sr. Mary Agnes as the superior.²⁷

The first four women had to scramble to find a place to live because the woman who was supposed to rent a house to them thought they were blood sisters and, when finding that was not the case, canceled the contract. Instead, the sisters moved into the Wheeling Hospital and continued to live in the hospital for decades to come.²⁸ Wheeling Hospital was the first hospital in western Virginia to provide nursing services, so the history of nursing in West Virginia is closely linked to the lives of women religious in Wheeling.²⁹ These nurses had no formal training, as the first formal nursing schools in the country did not open until after the Civil War. Nor were proper middle-class Protestant American nurses, especially not for strangers who were males, although they would care for their own family members. One of the ways, then, that sisters transgressed gender boundaries was by caring for the sick in hospitals, even at the risk of their own health in times of epidemics.³⁰ Nursing in the United States “emerged as a hybrid religious and professional practice” because of the work of the nuns. A “new variation of the nursing religious sister” emerged in the United States and Canada as a result of “Protestant hostility and the impoverished state of the Catholic Church, combined with the wider community's desperate need for the skills and expertise of the sisters.”³¹

Mother Stanislaus attended a General Assembly that Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis and Mother St. John Facemaz, superior at Carondelet, called in May 1860 to unite the nine mission communities in Philadelphia, St. Paul, Toronto, Hamilton (Ontario), Wheeling, Buffalo, Brooklyn (now Brentwood), Natchez, and Albany because the archbishop and Mother Superior apparently thought they were losing control of the missions.³² Bishop Whelan opposed the plan for centralization, deciding that the Wheeling SSJs would become autonomous from Carondelet. Therefore, on May 4, the Wheeling SSJs separated from Carondelet, Bishop Whelan appointed Mother Stanislaus as the superior of the house and authorized her to establish a novitiate.³³

The 1860 census listed 22-year-old Eliza Mathews [*sic*] as the head of the household. Mary Feeney [Sr. Immaculate]; Margaret Foley [no one with this name in SSJ records]; Elizabeth Stillwagoner [Sr. Xavier]; and Honora Sullivan [Sr. Aloysius], all identified as Sisters of Charity. There were also 15 orphan girls and one servant, Patrick Killey.³⁴ The original group from Carondelet still in Wheeling (Srs. Anastasia, Sebastian, and Ligouri) returned to Carondelet sometime after the census was taken, taking Sr. Xavier with them.³⁵ Mother

Stanislaus was left with 1 other professed sister (Sr. Immaculate Feeny), 2 novices (Sr. Aloysius and Sr. Vincent), and Sarah Breslin, a postulant who would become Sr. M. John Evangelist. When Mother Stanislaus died of consumption in the fall of 1860, Sr. Immaculate became the superior, mistress of novices, administrator of the hospital and orphanage.³⁶ Even though the SSJs would expand their teaching and nursing responsibilities enormously during the coming war, their numbers remained amazingly small for the Herculean tasks they tackled. Indeed, there may only have been as many as eight women in the order at the most during the war.³⁷

Mary Denis Maher pointed out that “the sisters brought four important contributions to Civil War nursing: tradition and experience, skills and religious commitment as a model for others, a willingness and ability to adapt to the needs of unpredictable situations, and written regulations for nurses, patient treatment, and personal discipline.” Sisters of all orders were critical to the war effort, as “over 600 sisters from twenty-one different Catholic women’s communities, representing twelve separate orders, . . . served during the Civil War. One in five army nurses was a nun. The sister-nurses staffed military hospitals and hospital ships, performed battlefield triage, operated ‘pest’ hospitals for soldiers with contagious diseases, and turned their convents into makeshift hospitals.”³⁸ The SSJs operated their hospital without much change in mission until September 1862, when they received soldiers wounded at the Battle of Harpers Ferry, a prelude to the Battle of Antietam on September 17. Thereafter, the sisters cared for both Union and Confederate soldiers and started visiting the prisoners held at the Athenaeum.³⁹

The sisters faced major challenges when caring for the prisoners, for Dr. John Frizzell reported on September 11, 1862, that many of the prisoners had suffered from “measles, mumps, rheumatism, with occasional cases of typhoid fever and affections of the heart and lungs,” although there were reportedly ninety prisoners on that day.⁴⁰ The *War of the Rebellion* records do not identify the SSJs as caring for the prisoners, but it is probably safe to say that they had something to do with the fact that the official inspection reports for January 1865 included the comments “General health of prisoners—very good” and “General health of prisoners—good.”⁴¹

Sr. Immaculate resigned as superior on February 26, 1864. There were then 23 patients, “a few orphans, and some indigent persons” living in the hospital.⁴² Two days later, at the request of Bishop Whelan to Bishop John Loughlin of Brooklyn, 30-year-old Sr. Mary De Chantal (Jane Keating) arrived in Wheeling from the Brooklyn Diocese to be the General Superior of the Wheeling Congregation. She was serving as mistress of novices at the congregation’s motherhouse and novitiate in Flushing, New York, and teaching at St. Joseph’s Academy there when she was sent to Wheeling.⁴³ It is not clear why Bishop Whelan went to the Brooklyn Diocese in search of a new superior, but does seem the sisters may have had no voice in this decision.⁴⁴ Perhaps, there simply was no one available in Wheeling to do this job.⁴⁵ Mother de Chantal proved to be a “dynamic, assertive, and creative woman who won tremendous respect,” although the bishop occasionally may have had second thoughts about her appointment since she was not afraid to speak up for the community, even if that meant challenging him.⁴⁶

On March 4th, the Soldier’s Aid Society asked the SSJs to “take charge of the Military patients,” all of who were “prostrated with disease,” who were then staying at the Athenaeum. Within three days, forty-seven soldiers moved to the hospital.⁴⁷ The Athenaeum housed “Confederate prisoners of war, citizens who refused to ally with the North, suspected rebel spies, court marshaled soldiers, and anyone suspected of even minor offenses” until October 1865. The sisters nursed the patients at the Athenaeum without regard to political allegiance.⁴⁸ The Athenaeum also housed soldiers who had to be quarantined with contagious diseases.⁴⁹

Less than two months after she arrived, Mother de Chantal hosted an inspection visit from Wheeling’s Mayor Crangle, Captain Over, George Wheat, and Thomas Hornbrook, who “were looking for a suitable Building wherein to establish a Post Hospital. They chose the

hospital as the best option. The Union Army rented the south wing of the hospital for \$600 a year and detailed several "sentenced Yankees" to make alterations.⁵⁰ Soldiers who needed to be quarantined were kept at the Athenaeum, where the SSJs continued to visit them.⁵¹

Mr. Price, an agent for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, deposited "\$1000 worth of goods, such as are needed by the sick soldiers," to the new Post Hospital on April 28.⁵² The hospital's eight private patients were joined by the soldiers and one "Rebel Prisoner who has a Parole of the City of Wheeling and is very ill (S.W. Emory). Also four of the soldiers had died, that was "a small number considering that there were so many cases of serious illness among them"⁵³ The other soldiers

were brought to the Wheeling hospital and soon had filled every available foot of space and overflowed into the yard. Sister Ignatius recount[ed], "We had to keep more of them in tents in the yard than inside the hospital. We had no trained nurses, for there were no nursing schools. We had only the benefit of home and practical training. There were so few of us that it was necessary to work almost without stop to care for the sufferers who poured into the city to be treated at the government hospital. They were from both armies, and, of course, no difference was made in the manner of their care. Officers and soldiers in blue or gray, or simply diseased, starving people, they were all the same to us."⁵⁴

The Soldiers' Aid Society of Wheeling paid the 50 cents a day fee for each soldier at the hospital. The Soldiers' Aid Society also drew the patients' rations from the army, sold them, and donated the proceeds to caring for the patients at the North Wheeling Hospital.⁵⁵

On July 26, Capt. Ewald Over arrived at the hospital to order "the entire house taken possession of, as some two hundred invalids had arrived very unexpectedly; accordingly they were sent up as fast as ambulances could be procured for them. We laid them on the floor on rows of Blankets, supplied them with immediate requirements and left them to repose as they might, after a toilsome journey."⁵⁶ The soldiers had come by train from Cumberland, Maryland. The next day, Mother de Chantal wrote that

we are busy enough but can do a great deal to soothe their miseries. We have divided the House; Sisters Vincent and Stanislaus have the North wing and Sisters Chantal & Agnes the South; our work is about equally divided. Sister Aloysius was engaged to take charge of the Special Diet Kitchen, a month ago. Today we went to the [Wheeling] Island House & examined it; it will suit tolerably well for the Orphans & the Bishop is willing to let us occupy it. We have found places for our private Patients with difficulty.⁵⁷

Dr. Kirker took over the entire North Wheeling Hospital for government use, and the hospital became a United States General Military Hospital.⁵⁸ Mother de Chantal; Mary Agnes Kelly, Stanislaus Hohman; and Srs. Ignatius, Aloysius, and Vincent received commissions from the Union army as army nurses.⁵⁹ On August 1, the orphans, accompanied by several sisters were transferred to Wheeling Island. Meanwhile, Mother de Chantal accompanied "Dr. Kirker in his morning visit to the wards & [took] his orders for the Patients. The wounded are attended to as soon as Mass is over; they have no beds to lie on and are uncomfortable."⁶⁰

When Mother de Chantal next recorded her chronicles on September 17th, the sisters were "busy still. Sr. Vincent has taken charge of the Prescription Book and we are kept at active duty much of the time. Our Papers have been sent from Washington City and we [six sisters] are enrolled in Govt service."⁶¹ Due to the overcrowded conditions, they "gave up their beds and moved to the chapel where they slept on the floor."⁶² By that day (September 17th), the hospital had been "thoroughly renovated, repaired and made to suit the purposes and plans of the Surgeon in charge." Two hundred patients could be accommodated "comfortably."⁶³ When "the hospital lost its pharmacist," Mother de Chantal "began checking each new contingent of wounded men

until she found a man with pharmacist credentials.” He was a French Canadian who was bedfast, so she moved his bed into the pharmacy, and he “directed her in the preparation of medications.”⁶⁴

All did not go well with the military takeover. The government did not pay its rent in a timely fashion and, on February 6, 1865, Mother de Chantal left Wheeling on "Govt Transportation" "for Washington City accompanied by an Orphan Child, an insane soldier and guard." Two days later, she went to the War Department to demand payment. One can just picture this Mother Superior, in a long black habit, confronting General Hardie, orphan and insane soldier in tow, in a public relations masterpiece. General Hardie assured her "it was impossible to have the matter settled as speedily as desired." But, on February 18, she learned that her application had been granted and "all arrears are to be paid. Laus Deo."⁶⁵

The SSJs and other nurse nuns emerged from the war with a much stronger image in the minds of Protestant Americans. “The horror and hostility with which sisters had previously been met by non-Catholics was lessened and, more important, their utility in the acute hospital setting was confirmed in the minds of government, doctors, and the military. Nursing skill was one important element of this success. However, of great importance, too, was the discipline and reliability the sisters offered, not as a group of enthusiastic amateurs, but as a disciplined corps—something the army related to and admired.”⁶⁶

For their war-time efforts, Mother de Chantal received an Army Nurse's Pension, beginning in 1896, and the "Comrades to Nurses" medal of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) in 1904. Both she and Sr. Mary Ignatius received bronze medals for service from the GAR after the war. Sr. Mary Ignatius also received a pension in 1899 in recognition of her work as a nurse in the Medical Department, United States Volunteers.⁶⁷

The SSJs reclaimed their hospital by the summer of 1865, and the orphans returned there to live. On July 22nd, the SSJs published a notice “to inform their friends and the public generally” that they had re-opened the hospital “for the reception of all patients not afflicted with contagious diseases.” Patients would receive the “strictest attention . . . to everything connected with the welfare of patients to their care,” with “moderate” terms “proportioned to the accommodation required.” The sisters were not doctors, so they also used this opportunity to ask the “Medical Faculty of Wheeling” to return to their work at the hospital that they had had to abandon under the military occupation. That month, Bishop Whelan informed the SSJs that they were to move into the old Visitandine monastery. Only those sisters needed at the hospital continued to live there to take care of the orphans and patients.⁶⁸

The sisters still hoped to own the hospital, but Bishop Whelan never approved that purchase.⁶⁹ Still, to try to facilitate this goal, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph was incorporated on August 10, 1866, in West Virginia under the secular names of Jane C. Keating, Mary P. Feeney, Honorah Sullivan, Fanny Stewart Smyth, and Sarah A. Breslin, with the Congregation's main office at St. Joseph's Hospital. This was the first organization in the state where the incorporators were all women.⁷⁰ In addition, the sisters had to raise money just to support their work. Therefore, Srs. Mary Paul and Mary Cecelia sailed to California in early August 1868 to raise money for the hospital and orphans from “‘prominent persons in San Francisco’.” A steamship company and railroad donated the tickets.⁷¹ The sisters returned to Wheeling on March 22, 1869, having met with success on their trip.

By 1869, a *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reporter commented on his brief visit to the Wheeling Hospital as follows:

We had heard of the admirable manner in which it was kept by the Sisters, and we found on personal examination that the reports of its scrupulous

neatness were correct. The wards are patterns of cleanliness, and all the internal arrangements are complete. The grounds surrounding the building have been tastily laid out, and later in the season, will present a very attractive appearance. There are twenty-six inmates in the building who are receiving medical treatment, together with the assiduous and tender nursing of those who have had large experience in the watch care of the sick.⁷²

The number of sisters grew after the war. According to Coburn and Smith, "The nursing activities and notable service of women religious during the Civil War had a major effect on diminishing anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States. Their religious identity also modified gender limitations, and their highly visible presence in nineteenth-century public life helped make inroads for the acceptance and expansion of the role of other American women in the field of nursing."⁷³ Fifty entered between 1865 and 1870; the places of origin in the SSJ records were Ireland (9), Germany, Toronto, and Pittsburgh (3 each), Wheeling (2), Washington, Pennsylvania, and Lewis County, West Virginia (1 each). Lewis County was a center of Irish immigration at the time.⁷⁴ The 1870 census listed 21 women in the convent under the leadership of Mother de Chantal, plus a support staff of 2 waitresses, 3 cooks, and 2 laundresses who were lay professed sisters, and 11 students who ranged in age from 4 to 18. Another 12 SSJs lived and nursed at Wheeling Hospital, where Sr. Stanislaus presided over an establishment of 78 people. In addition to the sisters, there were 2 white women domestics and a black man, 4 women identified as "Inmate of Hospital," 13 men listed as residents with occupations ranging from "Editor Paper" to general laborer, 2 young boys, 9 women with no occupation, 16 orphan girls, 16 girls "at school," and 2 otherwise unidentified girls.⁷⁵

While the SSJs went about their work as nurses, Drs. Eliza Hughes and Elizabeth J. French practiced medicine in Wheeling.⁷⁶ To set the scene for their achievements, it is important to briefly mention the status of medical education for women at this time. Harriot K. Hunt and her sister Sarah started their medical practice as female physicians in Boston in October 1835, making Harriot the first woman to practice medicine successfully in this country. Hunt received her training through an apprenticeship that she started in 1834 with Dr. and Mrs. Richard D. Mott, who used Systematic Vegetable Medicines and Patent Champoo [*sic*] and Medicated Baths to cure people.⁷⁷

Hunt and the Motts were among those responding to the growing dissatisfaction with heroic medicine. These followers of new medical systems, known as sectarians, began to compete with the regular profession for public patronage, legitimacy, and authority, arguing, sometimes, that nature should do the healing, not doctors. The sectarians included hydropaths, who used only water internally, and externally in the form of baths and hot and cold compresses, shunning surgery and drugs altogether. Botanics (later Eclectics) substituted so-called natural remedies for chemical and mineral ones. Homeopaths used drugs but believed in such minuscule doses that their prescriptions had no deleterious effect and possibly no effect at all. Sectarian philosophies attracted middle-class women students, in part because they favored the popular diffusion of professional knowledge and respected women's enhanced responsibilities in the family. So, as licensing laws relaxed and sectarian schools welcomed women, a large proportion of medical practitioners could use the title of M.D.⁷⁸ As the first worldwide, systematic option to bloodletting, homeopathy quickly became popular across the United States because of its painlessness, lack of side effects, and relative simplicity.⁷⁹ Homeopathy "profoundly affected 19th century medical practice, ending shotgun prescriptions and introducing elements of conservatism to dominant medical theories." Homeopathy was being practiced in Ohio by about 1836.⁸⁰ The American Institute of Homeopathy was organized in April 10, 1844.⁸¹

Women who followed these practices were not Aregulars, or those Awho identified with the standardize therapies of the time. Mary Roth Walsh noted that, Although irregular women healers were an important part of nineteenth-century medicine, it is difficult to know how freely they chose such medical specialties since their other options were so circumscribed. Moreover, once having embarked on an irregular medical career, they were in no position to demand entrance into the regular medical schools, hospitals, and professional societies the institutions that, for better or worse, made up the American medical establishment then as now. She also pointed out that it is wrong to criticize these Airregulars, because Ain an age when there were few medically valid theories available, no one had a monopoly on medical truth.⁸²

The American Medical Association (AMA) was founded (1846 for first National Medical Convention, with formal approval of group in 1847) to counter trends in state legislatures that were Aabolishing restrictive licensing legislation, which already had proved difficult to enforce.⁸³ The Ohio County Medical Society, with Wheeling as the county seat of Ohio County, followed suit in 1847 after M. H. Houston, one of Wheeling=s Aleading physicians . . . returned from attendance on a meeting of the National [sic] Medical Association and invited the city=s physicians to his home for a speech and, apparently, plenty of wine.⁸⁴ Physicians also had to face the growing patent medicine industry, which encouraged Athe habit of self-dosing.⁸⁵

Elizabeth Blackwell, credited as the first woman physician only by ignoring Hunt, entered the Geneva Medical College in western New York in November 1847.⁸⁶ When she graduated on January 23, 1849, she became the first woman to earn a M.D. degree from a regular medical college.⁸⁷ Soon after she graduated, however, Geneva stopped admitting women students. That left the Central Medical School in Syracuse, New York, which graduated three women by 1851 as the Afirst coeducational medical school in the United States.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, Alfred Hughes (1824-1880), the brother of Eliza Clark Hughes (1817-1882), graduated from the Homeopathic College in Philadelphia and opened his practice in Wheeling in 1849. His wife, Mary Kirby Adrian Hughes, was the daughter of Joanna Grigg Adrian and Washington Adrian, who lived in Zanesville before moving to Wheeling. His first success as a doctor in Wheeling came with the 1854 cholera epidemic. When all but one of his patients recovered, he quickly developed a large practice. “But his specialty was the treatment of the diseases of women, especially of uterine and cancerous trouble, and his success in these was remarked even by some of our best physicians of the old school of practice.”⁸⁹

Reportedly, Eliza=s desire for the study of medicine was first awakened by the reading of the medical works in her brother=s library. Although always most eager and earnest in the perusal of such matters, it was long before she entertained the idea of entering upon a regular course of professional study; and even after having formed the resolution it was with no definite intention of practicing. When the thought was first suggested to her mind, she did not give it expression. Knowing the prejudice widely entertained against women adopting such an occupation in life, she shrank from the remarks the decision would give rise to; but her purpose once acknowledged, her determination did not falter, notwithstanding the pressure of opposition.⁹⁰

Hughes received some of the best formal medical education open to women at her time. She studied at the Western Homeopathic College of Cleveland in the 1850s and then went to the Penn Medical University, where she studied with Dr. Joseph Longshore, professor of obstetrics and diseases of women and children.⁹¹ Longshore is a critical figure in women’s medical education. In 1850, he had led a group of Quakers who started the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania (later the Woman=s Medical College of Pennsylvania) in Philadelphia.⁹² Three

years later, he was one of the incorporators of the Penn Medical College of Philadelphia, later renamed the Penn Medical University.⁹³ Hughes graduated from the Female Department of the Penn Medical University in the spring of 1860.

Beginning on May 29, 1860, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* included regular business card ads that announced that Alfred Hughes, M.D., a Homoeopathic physician, had ASSOCIATED WITH HIM, IN THE PRACTICE [sic] of medicine, his sister, Eliza C. Hughes, M.D., a graduate of the Penn Medical University of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who will devote her attention exclusively to Obstetrics and the Disease of Females and Children. They practiced at Alfred's home.⁹⁴ Dr. Longshore would have been proud of her, I think, for he felt obstetrics was the one above all others that should claim [women's] most assiduous and untiring attention; it [was] the one to which they [were] most deeply indebted, when properly administered, for their comfort and safety, and the well-being of their infant offspring, in the hour of their greatest peril, greatest need, and nature's greatest extremity.⁹⁵

Hughes was almost certainly the first woman graduate of any medical school in what would become the state of West Virginia and the first woman to practice medicine professionally in what would be West Virginia. Her story, then, enriches our understanding of urban educated women's lives, of the practice of medicine in mid-nineteenth-century urban Appalachia as doctors with competing philosophies of medicine sought to control their profession, and of the history of women's experiences in the practice of medicine. Her story also shows us how Confederates, at least those from prominent families, fared in Union-dominated Wheeling. And from her letters, we catch a glimpse of what reads like a mid-nineteenth-century soap opera in her relationship with businesswoman Mary C. Leech (aka Leach), the business partner of Eliza's brother Thomas (1822-1886), a merchant tailor.⁹⁶

But, she is often not given the credit she deserves for this accomplishment, as most histories give that credit to Dr. Harriet B. Jones, who was starting her practice after Hughes died. Nor was she the first woman from Virginia to get a medical degree, as the author of *History of the Upper Ohio Valley* claimed, based on *Cleave's Biographical Cyclopaedia* and then perpetuated in Comstock's West Virginia encyclopedia.⁹⁷ That distinction belonged to Orianna Russell Moon of Albemarle County, who graduated from the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1857, apparently the first southern woman to earn a medical degree.⁹⁸ But, she may have been the second - who knows? And, she was most certainly NOT the first female graduate of any medical school, and is the pioneer of her sex in the practice of medicine in the State of Virginia, as *Cleave's* could be interpreted to ignore Elizabeth Blackwell.⁹⁹

Eliza Hughes was listed in the 1860 census in the household of her mother, the wealthy widow Mary Hughes. Eliza, then 42, was identified as a Physician >Hoem=. Two other women physicians were listed in that census - Eliza and Mary Elrich, ages 41 and 18, respectively, were both born in Pennsylvania and were boarding at the Monroe House Hotel.¹⁰⁰

Hughes did valiant work among the soldier [sic] during the war, but she earned far more publicity during the war for her non-medical activities.¹⁰¹ The Hugheses were a well-known Confederate family. Eliza even wrote to Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, on April 14, 1861. While Hughes's letter does not survive, Davis wrote back to her from Montgomery, Alabama, on April 29, 1861, noting that he had referred her letter to the respectful consideration of the Secretary of War. Your kind offer adds another to the many instances of women's self-sacrificing devotion and heroism. With such a spirit, gloriously in the bosom of our fair country women, how can we doubt the justice and final triumph [sic] of our cause?¹⁰² A complete list of the Traitors and Rebels of Wheeling, Va., who voted May 23, 1861, for the infamous Ordinances of Secession, adopted by the usurpers in the Richmond, Va., Convention included her brothers Alfred and Thomas.¹⁰³

The Hughes family paid a heavy price for their Confederate sympathies. On August 30, 1861, Captain Radcliffe of the Pierpoint Guards raided Alfred's house and arrested six young men who were suspected of signing up for the Rebel army. An unspecified number of ladies were in the house at the time of the arrest [including Eliza?], who had been engaged during the day in collecting funds for the purpose of forwarding the released prisoners to their homes.¹⁰⁴ On September 12, 1861, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that most of the witnesses who were sworn in and sent before the federal grand jury were unnamed "ladies who have been very prominent in secession circles. Some of them were greatly agitated, while others took the matter as philosophically as could be expected." The next day, in the midst of normal court proceedings, there was a great fluttering in the court room, in consequence of the arrival of ladies summoned as witnesses before the Grand Jury. Even after examining about 400 witnesses, the jury had had

a great deal of difficulty in getting out of many of the witnesses who know the most.

This is especially the case case [*sic*] with the ladies, who say that the Court is *is* [*sic*] a humbug and that the oath administered to them is of no account. Some of them will discover yet that the Court, if it is a humbug, is a pretty serious one.

On September 14, Marshal Norman reported to Judge Jackson and the court that, having been ordered to summon Miss Eliza Hughes to appear before the Court, he had gone to the house of Dr. Hughes, where he supposed she was to be found, and, while endeavoring to serve the summons, had been told by Dr. H. that she was not there and that he (the Marshal) was rendering himself officious in having ladies sent before the Grand Jury, and that he should be remembered for it, etc." The unnamed ladies were again in the news on September 19, when several of them were indicted for perjury. Six were brought into Court, under arrest, and gave bail in the sum of \$1,000, for their appearance at the next time. John Goshorn posted a recognizance bond for two of the women with the condition that they "appear on the first day of the next term, and will not take up arms, or give any aid, comfort, or *adhere* to the enemies of the United States." The court then adjourned, with no further indication of what happened to Eliza.¹⁰⁵

When the court met again in Wheeling in April 1862, the Hugheses were back in the news. On April 17, Alfred was on trial for a misdemeanor in resisting and obstructing the United States Marshal in the execution of a process. . . . E. M. Norton, the United States Marshal testified that he had attempted to serve a process upon a lady at Dr. Hughes' house, and upon inquiring for her, was told by the Doctor that he (the Marshal) was very officious and that shortly he would find his place or words to that effect. He afterwards met the lady and served the process upon her. Was the lady Eliza? The next day, the paper reported that eight ladies" who testified the previous fall and were then indicted for perjury renewed their recognizance bonds of \$1000 each to appear at the next term.¹⁰⁶

On June 1, 1862, Eliza reportedly wrote a certain false scandalous, malicious and defamatory letter to Mary C. Leech, her brother Thomas's business partner, claiming that she degraded herself by having any communication with such a character as Leech. She fearlessly and boldly cast into [the] teeth of Mary Leech that Leech was and had been for years a kept mistress, and the blackest curse to our family that ever God let live. She accused Mary of bodily prostitution that succeeded in tearing from a widowed mother a son and from an orphan sister her Brother. In response, Leech apparently went to court, where the grand jurors, a year later, said Hughes was such an evil wicked & malicious person, who had libeled Leech to the great damage disgrace scandal & infamy of Leech. The case was dismissed.¹⁰⁷

Alfred Hughes left for Camp Chase on June 5, 1862.¹⁰⁸ Family letters give glimpses of Eliza's practice as she prescribed for Alfred's wife Mary, their Aunt Cynthia, and other patients. For example, on July 6, 1862, Eliza asked Alfred "What really did you give the young lady who lives near West Wheeling . . . She has to [*sic*] frequent menstruation. I do not know her name.

Mr. De Bs eye is greatly swollen again.@ Finally, Eliza concluded the letter with APS The lable [sic] on the bottles in your case are so faded I cant make out what they are.@¹⁰⁹

Major Dorr, the provost marshall gneral in Wheeling with responsibilty for enforcing the oath of allegiance to the Union, arrested Eliza in August 1862 after she refused to take the oath. After going to jail briefly, she must have reconsidered her loyalty to the Confederacy, for the story on her arrest concluded with AP.S. B Since writing the above we learn that Miss Hughes repented, took the oath and was released.@¹¹⁰

Eliza found it hard to practice medicine by herself and complained to Alfred that: I don=t know what to do, these times are so trying, and I don=t like to go to any expense for the best reason in the world I can=t afford it. And another is I hope to leav [sic] Wheeling some day and never live in it again, in fact I never did like it and never shall. I do not know anything about taken out license nor the cost. The horse and buggy expense would be more than I am able to meet. To walk would be out of the question. I am afraid to incur expenses unless I see my way clean. Such times as these nothing can be made unless business changes a great deal. What do you think I had better do. It seems impossible to collect money to meet expenses therefore I cant see what I am to do under existing circumstances. I am anxious to do what is right, and so fearful of making any mistake while have such bitter enemies watching over me. Oh! How I wish I could see my way clear and know what is best to do! I have turned the subject over and over in my mind and yet cant arrive at any positive conclusion. Mary thinks as I do that there is no prospect of being able to meet expenses. So I will leave the subject for your decision. She then described what she had done to help Mary recover from her illness, while revealing enormous insecurity about her medical skills:

The [unclear] is all right and it was the yellow powder I have and as soon as I felt a doubt about the powder in the beige bottle I made a search that satisfied me in regard to the [unclear] and so did in the medical dictionary and to make it still safer I wrote you before I would have occasion to use any out of this other bottle. Depend upon it I was acting with great care in regard to medicine. . . .¹¹¹

In September 1862, the federal court again met in Wheeling, and the Athe several ladies of secession proclivities” again “renewed their recognisances [sic] to appear at the next term.@¹¹²

Eliza wrote again to Alfred on September 29 to report on her treatment of Mrs. E. W. Stevens for a sore breast:

left mammary is hard and much swollen and of an erysiplatusus [?] redness. I gave Bell, today it seems as it if would gather [?] near the sternum and another on the edge of the aeole [?]. I gave Hefer Sulphur ths morning would you advise franltine [?] and some other remedy in alternation? It being the first case of the kind I ever had I feel great anxiety to cure it with as little suffering as possible to her as she seems nervously afraid of suffering. . . .The cause of the inflammation is cold and this neglect to drain the breast as she was about to wean her child. . . .¹¹³

In January 1863, Alfred was paroled from Camp Chase, closed his practice, sold his home, and moved his family to Richmond, where he practiced and served in the Virginia legislature until the end of the war. He then moved to Baltimore to practice until his death on February 25, 1880. Eliza was then truly on her own, as evidenced by her new business card ad for January 27, 1863, announcing that she was a Ahomoepathic physician@ who had graduated from the Philadelphia Medical College and had Ahad the advantage of the constant practical advice and joint practice of her brother.@ Her services were available to the people of Wheeling Aand the surrounding country.@ She practiced out of the home she shared with her mother.¹¹⁴

In April 1863, the federal court returned to Wheeling; Aseveral ladies, who were indicted for perjury about a year ago, appeared and renewed their recognisances.@¹¹⁵ Still not named, they dropped out of the court record thereafter.

In spite of the hesitancy in her letters, Egbert Cleave claimed she was Adevoted to her profession.@ She was not a member of the West Virginia State Medical Association, which was organized on April 10, 1867.¹¹⁶ Most likely, she was denied membership because she practiced homeopathy, as the society's clear goal was to elevate Athe standard of Practical Medicine and Surgery in West Virginia, and to render quackery odious, as it deserves.@¹¹⁷ Nor is there any evidence that she was a member of the Wheeling and Ohio County Medical Society (WOCMS) and the Microscopical Society, both organized in 1868, which included Athe majority of the medical men of the city and county@ in the WOCMS.¹¹⁸

At some point, Hughes moved to Baltimore for at least a few years to live with relatives there. There, "Although devoted to her profession, she [found] opportunity to cultivate her tastes for literary pursuits, in which she [had] been engaged for a long time." Meanwhile, the process of setting up medical examining boards started in Kentucky in 1874. Hughes could not have been licensed to practice in Maryland, because that state had no registration law and did not create a n examining board until 1888.¹¹⁹ West Virginia did not pass a licensing law until 1881, so Hughes had little chance to be licensed there at the end of her career.

Hughes was in Baltimore for the 1880 census but was back in Wheeling when she died on May 27, 1882, at the age of sixty-five. Although she reportedly contributed Amuch literary matter to the press, being known both as an authoress and poetess,@ I have not yet found any references to her work.¹²⁰ At the time of her death, she Ahad attained quite an eminent position in the practice of homeopathy, being particularly successful in treating children. Her services were in great demand for miles around Wheeling, and she had won the confidence and esteem of a wide and numerous circle of acquaintances@¹²¹

There were also traveling physicians who showed up in Wheeling. Mrs. Addison and Dr. Elizabeth J. French. I know very little about Mrs. Addison, who spoke in Washington Hall in October 1855. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* described her only as a Afemale physician@ who would be providing Arather an unusual attraction in Wheeling@ with her free lecture on the APhilosophy of Health@ Mrs. Addison was staying at the McLure House. She was to be there for a week so that men and women could consult her and get free examinations Aon all diseases incident to the human family@ daily between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mrs. Addison (aka Madame Addison), was from France and Amore recently of Boston.@ She reputedly Ahad much success in the treatment of consumption and nervous diseases and [was] highly spoken of as a doctress.@ She advertised that she was Aan Independent Clairvoyant, She does not make sick to make well, nor tear down to build up, but persons under her care can pursue their regular course of business, while the work of cleansing and purifying the system is going on.@¹²² I think she only appeared once, and I have been unable to find anything else about her.

Dr. Elizabeth J. French, however, was a much more frequent and famous visitor to Wheeling. French was born in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1821. Her father was a physician, so she learned medicine from him. She first appeared in Wheeling in July 1869, when the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* announced she would Alecture to ladies exclusively.@ Her lecture, entitled AHealth,@ was free. She then gave another lecture as the first of a course of four lectures. Immediately after the lecture, Aanyone wishing to consult Mrs. F. can do so privately." She gave another free lecture to ladies on health on Tuesday afternoon, July 27. That lecture was also well attended, with several coming from Bellaire, Bridgeport, and Martinsville. Each of her four lectures that started on the 28th cost 50 cents. Again, she was available for consultations both before and after the lectures at the Grant House hotel. She also promised to give Aseveral

illustrations of treating disease with electricity¹²³ at a free lecture. The use of electricity in medicine had begun in the late eighteenth century in London. French advertised Applications of electricity made during the lecture to all who wish it and are suffering with chronic or nervous difficulties¹²³ at no extra charge. Afflicted, don't fail to be present. Her demonstrations were reportedly very effective, as Her consultation rooms are thronged by those seeking relief by her new and most approved treatment. Instances of almost miraculous character have been brought to our attention, in which diseases, chronic and obstinate, have yielded in a very short period to the efficacy of the remedial agents which she employs. Other ads boasted that "All suffering from nervous difficulties, rheumatism, &c. can be relieved without extra charge."¹²³

So great was the interest in her lectures on health and electricity, with ever increasing attendance, that she lectured in Bridgeport and Martinsville in late August. She added a new feature to one Bridgeport lecture by inviting men to attend, also. Almost daily reports of her availability in Wheeling for consultations included a comment that "From far and near, all ages and conditions are brought to test the virtue of the great remedial agent she employs, and scarcely one goes away without being benefitted. . . . No nauseous drugs used."¹²⁴

Another lecture topic was "How to have good infants, and happy and obedient children." Again, this was for women only, and she promised electrical experiments¹²⁵ after the lecture. Through early November, she was almost daily performing cures which had been pronounced impossible by the Faculty. Her success in the treatment of Asthma, Catarrh and Diphtheria, is without precedent in this region." People from Baltimore and vicinity were traveling to Wheeling, "and it is said were very materially benefitted." She planned to open a gymnasium for light gymnasts, this being one of her methods of cure. This opened in January.¹²⁵

French continued to travel, leaving for Pittsburgh and then Cleveland, but promising to return to Wheeling. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that:
Her stay here has been characterized with the most complete success. Scarcely a day has passed that her rooms have not been crowded with patients and in nearly every instance her efforts to restore the afflicted to health have resulted most happily. Cases heretofore deemed beyond the reach of medicine have yielded to the remedies prescribed by the system Mrs. French practices. Many certificates to that effect could be given, but it is not thought necessary.¹²⁶

In March, she left for Columbus after several more weeks in Wheeling, where she treated several cases of deafness, cancer and blindness, which had been pronounced incurable and has wrought cures bordering on miraculous.¹²⁷

French was a widow by 1873 or 1877, when she dedicated her *A New Path in Electrical Therapeutics: An Account of Prof. Elizabeth J. French's Great Discovery of Electrical Cranial Diagnosis . . .* to Joseph French, Civil Engineer and Late Superintendent of the Pittsburgh City Water Works. She claimed to have twenty-five years of arduous study and industrious research into the principles of medical electricity, together with a vast range of practical experience in the results of its application as a therapeutic agent. In the fourth edition of her book, French included a list of references, all eminent and distinguished names," from all over the East and Midwest, including Zanesville and Wheeling. *A New Path* included a variety of Cases of Cure, including the Testimony of H. W. Phillips, Esq., of Wheeling, West Va., in the Case of his Child. A January 7, 1870, letter from Phillips referred to her visit to Wheeling the previous fall, when she had cured his daughter's scrofulous sore eyes¹²⁸ that had left the girl totally blind at times. French had also treated Mrs. Phillips for a combination of diseases, and was very much benefitted by her. At her suggestion, Mrs. Phillips had purchased a battery and continued to use that to cure her disease.¹²⁸

During that same fall 1869 Wheeling visit, French had treated AMrs. B-----A, who had been married for seventeen years and suffered Aintolerable@ pains, including Afrequent spasms or fits,@ every month as a result of a fall and miscarriage early in her marriage. AAt times she was partially insane, and it would require several persons to hold her in bed.@ After being on Amorphine and other sedatives,@ Mrs. B. consulted French. AShe commenced electric treatment just after one of her periodical attacks, and, almost impossible as it may seem, she never had another. Electricity seemed indeed a panacea in her case.@ With her pain gone and her periods again regular, she became pregnant and named her baby girl Elizabeth in French's honor. When French returned to Wheeling in 1870, she treated a woman who had had hemorrhoids and fistula. Nothing helped, and she was reluctant to risk surgery because her relatives had died from surgery to treat similar problems. After an electrical treatment, she was cured in four weeks.¹²⁹

French also took up the cause of alcohol abuse and lectured Aextensively" on temperance, "being the originator of the Women=s Prayer Band.@ She published her lecture on *Alcohol: An Enemy to Health, Morals, and Happiness* in 1873. Profits from the sales of the lecture were ADEVOTED TO THE SUPPORT OF THE ELECTRICAL CLINICS [FREE] FOR THE SICK POOR, FOUNDED BY ELIZABETH J. FRENCH.@¹³⁰

French=s other publications included: *A New Manual of Electro-Therapeutics, and a Brief Treatise on Anatomy and Physiology* (Chicago: W.B. Bean, Cooke & Co., 1875, edited by M.L. French); *Family Guide For the Application of Electricity in Common Ailments with The Combination Battery* (Cincinnati: Spencer & Craig, 1877); *A Complete Manual of Electro-therapeutics, and a Brief Treatise on Anatomy and Physiology* (1885); and *A New Path in Electrical Therapeutics: An Account of the Author=s Great Discovery of Electrical Cranial Diagnosis and the Scientific Application of Different Currents of Electricity to the Cure of Disease: A Brief Treatise on Anatomy and Physiology*, 5th ed. revised and corrected (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Co. 1886). In her 1875 Treatise, she advertised AElectro-Magnetic Chest Protectors, Insoles, and Other Appliances for the Human Body,@ which she had invented to produced Aa silent, but constant current of electricity; stimulating and equalizing the circulation, removing and preventing **Colds, Coughs, Rheumatism, Cramps, and like Complaints.**@ French was then operating in Philadelphia, with her manufactory in Providence, Rhode Island.¹³¹ AThe Combination Battery" was manufactured especially for her "sold only by her authorized agents." The battery jar was filled with dilute sulphuric acid and two ounces of quicksilver. Then, patients took the two nickle plated round electrodes and placed them Aon different portions of the body, with a cloth wet with warm water between the electrode and the skin.@¹³² Where and how long the patient put the electrodes depended on the ailment to be cured.

French practiced medicine in New York and Philadelphia before moving to Boston, where she died on January 11, 1900, at the home of her daughter, Dr. Belle French Patterson. She was Aone of the most distinguished women in the medical fraternity of this country. . . . Her special line of work was in the medical and therapeutic uses of electricity and electro-cranial diagnosis, in which she established a fame almost world-wide, receiving commendation from the most distinguished members of the medical profession in her age and time.@¹³³

Dr. James Reeves, Wheeling=s public health officer, had no use, though, for the likes of Dr. French. In his 1870 report on the public health of the city, he wrote as follows:

Notwithstanding the goodly number of honest, well educated and successful regular physicians and surgeons in the city, and also the many well remembered and constantly recurring examples of downright swindling perpetrated by travelling [*sic*] mountebanks, Wheeling is confessedly a most inviting and profitable field for the display of all sorts of strange medical visitors; and no man or woman, from a *corn doctor* or other *doctress*, up to the most finished quack lecturer, *Titilopath* and *Cure-all*, who has been able to take

rooms at a first class hotel, and pay liberally for local editorials or notices in the daily newspapers commending consummate skill, etc., has gone away with empty pockets. The success of quacks, however, cannot be charged to the ignorance of the massesBfor they are intelligent above the average of citiesBbut very properly to the virtuous character of the able gentlemen of the press, who, without malice aforethought, as a part of their trade, habitually permit the use of their influential columns, to allure the afflicted credulous poor of both city and country into the net of Charlatanism, where, when they are once fairly entangled, are unmercifully stripped of their hard earnings.¹³⁴

By 1870, Wheeling had A3 wholesale Drug Houses and 13 Prescription Stores,@ where residents could get Aany article in the notion line, including all sorts of quack medicines, stomach bitters, etc.,@ although APatent or proprietary medicines@ had Agreatly lost favor with the masses.@ There were A19 regular physicians and surgeons,@ as well as 2 Apersons@ who practiced homeopathy [including Eliza Hughes?]- Athat >negation of *physics*, as well as in medicine=,@ 3 Aeclectics,@ and 1 A>Water Doctor=,@ plus 5 dentists. Dr. Reeves was pleased to report that AThe present status of the [medical] profession in Wheeling is one of the most respectable character; and in no other city of the same size have all classes of people greater cause of thankful boasting in their supply of well educated, skilful [*sic*] and successful physicians. These gentlemen are generally *au courant* in the different departments of their profession, and, at the same time, are expert and appreciative manipulators of the valuable implements and aids which science and art have placed at their command for the investigation and treatment of disease.@¹³⁵

Reeves had no use for midwives. In his 1870 report on obstetrics, he noted that AWith the exception of the occasional employment of the services of an ignorant, adventurous *granny*, this branch of practice is in the hands of intelligent regular physicians.@ The next year, he added one important line to his disdain, noting that Aone of whom not long since administered chloroform to save her patient from the pains of labor.@¹³⁶ There was no mention of Hughes.

Finally, Dr. Harriet B. Jones is often credited with being the first woman M.D. in the state. She was the first woman to be licensed when she started her practice, but licensing laws did not come into effect until 1881 so Hughes never really had that option. Therefore, as so often happens in researching women's history, the answer to the question depends on how you phrase the question. I do not know if Hughes and Jones ever met, but Hughes set the stage for Jones and all the women who followed them. The SSJs also continued their interest in health care, in 1996, setting up the Sisters of Saint Joseph Charitable Fund to "continue and expand the health and wellness ministry" of the order.¹³⁷ And, in the summer of 2007, they joined all their separate congregations back into one, becoming the Congregation of St. Joseph.¹³⁸

Notes

¹ Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 1632, 1666.

² Regina Markell Morantz-Sanchez, *Sympathy & Science: Women Physicians in American Medicine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 49.

³ AMrs. Schotta, (sage femme),@ *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* (hereafter *WDI*), 25 September 1854.

⁴ AA Card,@ *WDI*, 17 March 1868.

⁵ U.S. Census, Census of Population, Ohio County, Wheeling, 1870, 4-229-224.

⁶ Tricia T. Pyne covers the early diocesan history in *Faith in the Mountains: A History of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, 1850-2000* (Strasbourg, France: Editions de Signe, 2000), 6-12.

- ⁷ Carol K. Coburn and Martha Smith, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 2-3.
- ⁸ Thanks to Margaret Brennan for her assistance in researching Eliza Hughes and the SSJs. Sr. Ann Hoyer, SSJ, generously shared her work on the history of the SSJs in Wheeling.
- ⁹ Thomas P. McCarthy, comp., *Guide to the Catholic Sisterhoods in the United States*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958), 156; Carol K. Coburn and Martha Smith, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 1; and Notebook for "Sisters of St. Joseph Sesquicentennial Display, Oglebay Park, March 19 through May 26, 2003."
- ¹⁰ Coburn and Smith, *Spirited Lives*, 1.
- ¹¹ Sioban Nelson, *Say Little, Do Much: Nurses Nuns, and Hospitals in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 1-2.
- ¹² Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 588.
- ¹³ Eileen Mary Brewer, *Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987), 15.
- ¹⁴ Joseph G. Mannard, "Converts & Convents," *Scholars* 4 (Spring/Summer 1993): 12.
- ¹⁵ "Interesting Ceremony," *WDI*, 17 March 1858.
- ¹⁶ Sr. Ann Hoyer, SSJ, "Seasons of Nature and of Grace: History of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling, 1853-2003" (Wheeling, W.Va.: Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling, 2002), 29.
- ¹⁷ Sioban Nelson, *Say Little, Do Much: Nurses, Nuns and Hospitals in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 17.
- ¹⁸ See, also, McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 577-579.
- ¹⁹ Nelson, *Say Little, Do Much*, 1.
- ²⁰ Mannard, "Converts & Convents," 12.
- ²¹ Hoyer, "Seasons of Nature and of Grace," 28.
- ²² Pyne, *Faith in the Mountains*, 14.
- ²³ McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 622.
- ²⁴ Nelson, *Say Little, Do Much*, 2-4, with "speak collectively" quote on 2-3.
- ²⁵ McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 622.
- ²⁶ "Centennial, Diocese of Wheeling, 1850-1950," *The West Virginia Register*, 3 November 1950, 35, 40.
- ²⁷ Hoyer, "Seasons of Nature and of Grace," 28.
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BECOMING AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS: JOHN FOX, JR.'S APPALACHIAN
HEROINES AS PORTRAYED BY MARY PICKFORD AND MARY MILES MINTER

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Abstract

Two of the most important silent film heroines were Mary Pickford and Mary Miles Minter. Possessing long, golden locks and angelic, childlike faces, both actresses rose to fame playing Appalachian maidens. Although Pickford and Minter were in competition with each other and so, tried to effect in their portrayals discernible differences between themselves, as this study will show, both actresses' Appalachian maidens in particular promote the same negative stereotype and, as such, demonstrate a stark divergence from their characterizations within the pages of the novels of John Fox, Jr.

"Her face was remarkable for its perfect beauty of feature than for a singular and dreamy earnestness of expression, which made the ideal start when they looked at her, and by which the dullest and most literal were impressed, without exactly knowing why. The shape of her head and the turn of her neck and bust was peculiarly noble, and the long golden-brown hair that floated like a cloud around it, the deep spiritual gravity of her violet blue eyes, shaded by heavy fringes of golden brown—all marked out from other children." ----Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)

One of Mary Pickford's first roles (at age nine in 1901) was as "Little Eva," in an adaptation for the stage of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. As biographer Eileen Whitfield points out, "strangely, Eva's description in the novel also depicts how Mary Pickford's audience responded to the actress when she scored her gigantic success as a child-woman on the screen years later."⁽¹⁾ Of course, actors and actresses have portrayed characters from famous (and not so famous) novels throughout the course of film history, so it is no surprise that a casting director would try to choose an actress he or she deemed particularly well-suited to the part, according to the original author's specifications. But an interesting dynamic arises in the cases of Mary Pickford and her lesser rival and seeming imitator, Mary Miles Minter. As I will show in this essay, Pickford, given her overwhelming success in early films (her last film was in 1933), commanded a sort of authority over her work that allowed her to assert her beloved acting persona onto well-known literary (and other) characters. Rather than the sort of one-to-one correlation between actress and role as suggested by the comparison of Pickford to the literary character "Little Eva" above, Pickford was revising, rewriting and re-interpreting famous characters so that these roles could best illustrate *her* performative strengths. Mary Miles Minter, possessing no small amount of celebrity and its requisite clout herself, did her best to present a version of Pickford's persona in her own films, in order to best compete with her. Through an examination of the Appalachian maiden character in two John Fox, Jr. novels and their subsequent film adaptations, one by Pickford and one by Minter---Heart o'the Hills (1919) and A Cumberland Romance

(1920) respectively, I will show how these actresses unobtrusively participated in the creation and proliferation of the hellcat hillbilly gal stereotype, in stark contrast to Fox's own interpretations of the type in his novels. While the "maiden of the hills" character seemed to conform to certain parameters for Fox, these parameters are startlingly altered by Pickford (and following her, Minter) in order to allow the role to be more consistent with her acting persona. Director Cecil B. Demille once wrote: " 'Somewhere, sometime, a phrase was born: "America's Sweetheart'" (2). In the race for that title, Pickford, Minter and other actresses of the golden tresses, effectively sacrificed the image of the mountain girl in American film.

Mary Pickford, born Gladys Smith in Toronto Canada in 1892, had her stage debut at age five and entered the movies in April 1909. As archivist Robert Cushman states, Pickford at age seventeen "had the vision to realize the hitherto undreamed-of potential of the motion picture while it was still in its infancy. She stayed with this new medium that many derided as a toy and went on to build a career that was unprecedented in the annals of entertainment and eventually made her the most popular woman in the world" (3). Pickford achieved many "firsts." She was the first international superstar and therefore the first film performer to ever have to deal with the overwhelming pleasures and pains that went along with world celebrity. She was the first female star to found her own corporation (in 1915), and because of that endeavor, invented the concept of the independent star/producer. And, she became the first female film distributor, as one of the four co-founders (with partners Douglas Fairbanks, Charles Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith) of United Artists in 1919 (4).

Over the course of her rapid rise to fame, Pickford developed a well-recognized and much-admired film persona, which can be identified as at least partly responsible for her great success. In his famous study of early film, Kevin Brownlow attempts to quantify this persona: "The character of Mary Pickford was an endearing little spitfire. She was delightful; she projected warmth and charm, but she had the uncontrollable fire of the Irish. Whenever a situation got out of hand, she would not submit to self-pity. She would storm off and do something about it, often with hilariously disastrous results" (5). Cushman also tries to describe the essence of the persona Pickford's public found so attractive: "To the contrary of her supposed naïveté, her characters can always grasp every situation or problem that confronts them, and, invariably, they will quickly charge off to do something about it. When menaced, Mary is more likely to get herself out of her predicament than call for the hero's help." (6). Pickford's persona was to quickly prove its significance, its dominance and its resonance.

As Raymond Lee has argued in The Films of Mary Pickford, "for 23 years and in more than 125 short features and 52 full length films, Mary Pickford ruled as queen of the screen. And many stars were born to her line of the Golden Curls. Marguerite Clarke, Mary Miles Minter, Mildred Harris—to name a few. All tried to follow in Mary's footsteps but none equaled her" (7). One of these "pretenders," Mary Miles Minter, was born Juliet Reilly in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1902. Initially, it was her mother, Charlotte Shelby, who had aspirations to work on the stage, but daughter Juliet who instead caught the attention of theatre producer Charles Frohman. Changing her

name to Mary Miles Minter soon after she found her way into films (perhaps to begin a sort of connection/competition with Pickford, ten years her senior), Minter's success grew to the point at least that she was able to command a \$1,300,000.00 five-year contract with Paramount Pictures in 1918 (8). Despite the fact that she mostly followed in Pickford's footsteps, being cast in roles that would have worked equally well for Pickford, Henry Dougherty's October 22, 1919 interview with Minter, published in the Los Angeles Examiner suggests that she had much greater aspirations for herself:

"For more than five years I have worked and played and planned—and sometimes cried—for the day when I could put my ideals on the screen. My contract with Realart makes this possible. I am to make 20 pictures. I want to remain in the background, but from the shadows I will tell Mary Miles Minter what to do. I do not want to be known as a fluffy-ruffles girl, or a doll face or anything of that kind. I want to work and to study and read life and know life, and to mirror that life on the screen so that it will not only entertain, but will suggest a lesson, or cause someone else to think of things that are wholesome and human and worthwhile."

Clearly, this 17-year-old had no idea the damage she had done and would yet do in terms of the image of the mountain girl. Her words belie no such intentions. Yet, as I will demonstrate through an examination of John Fox, Jr.'s Appalachian maidens, from the novels A Mountain Europa (1892) (9) (really a novelette) and Heart of the Hills (1912) (10), the changes made in the characterizations for the film versions, ostensibly to better suit Pickford (and Minter's) film persona, may have created the hillbilly gal stereotype that still exists in the media today.

John Fox, Jr., was born in 1862 near Paris, Kentucky and after trying other endeavors, finally published his first story A Mountain Europa as a serialization in *Century* magazine in 1892. As his biographer, W. I. Titus relates, this successful initial effort "was the first of many he was to write making use of the Kentucky mountain locale" (11). In fact, Fox was to build his writing career on the backs of the mountain folk who inhabited the Big Stone Gap region of Virginia where Fox both worked and lived. Along with writer Mary Noailles Murfree, Fox was considered one of the first to write knowledgeably and fairly about the Appalachian mountain lifestyle.

Fox's young female Appalachian characters vary one from the other, but as Titus argues, they still seem to conform to certain parameters. His Appalachian heroines can all easily be characterized, for instance, as "unlettered, unmannered, but naturally well-endowed" (12). Fox's heroines are romantic, sentimental and melodramatic. Mavis Hawn in The Heart of the Hills, is a "slim, wild little creature" (13), who possessed "a riotous mass of black hair," and "extraordinary lashes that veiled her eyes" (14). Fox's first heroine, Easter Hicks of The Mountain Europa, seems at first the most unladylike of such characters in that she demonstrates her facility with a rifle on more than one occasion and exhibits, at first, a detached and taciturn nature that one would expect more from a masculine character. Fox's hero in this story, Clayton, remembers his first encounter with Easter, riding through the forest on the back of a cow, "her supple figure

swaying with every movement of the beast, and dappled with quivering circles of sunlight from the bushes, her face calm, but still flushed with color, and her yellow hair shaking about her shoulders—not lusterless and flaxen, as hair was in the mountains, [...] but catching the sunlight like gold” (15). Each of these “wild” girl children of the mountains also shared, in Fox’s stories, the experience of edification as supplied by a caring character from the Bluegrass—the lowland center of civility and culture—and are then awakened to the larger world for the first time. And, in every case, the awakened Appalachian heroine becomes the traditional romantic heroine. Whatever agency she seems to have initially in regards to her social or economic status—agency that exists outside the norm for her gender—is radically suppressed in the stories’ later pages, when, now being both educated and cultured, she subjects herself willingly and gratefully to her more traditional role.

Each of these novels was adapted to the silent screen. A Mountain Europa was released as A Cumberland Romance in 1920 by Realart Pictures and starred Mary Miles Minter in the role of Easter Hicks (16). The Heart of the Hills also appeared on screen in several versions (one with Mary Pickford’s brother Jack in the role of Jason Hawn, called The Hillbilly (1924)), but my focus will be on Pickford’s 1919 version, produced by First National Pictures and titled Heart o’ the Hills (17).

I cannot effectively argue here for the wisdom of certain production choices made in filming these adaptations. In other words, certainly Fox’s narrative was twisted, morphed and adjusted to accommodate a rather fickle and hard-to-please viewing audience. This is always the case when adapting a work of literature to the screen, so Fox’s novels were no exception. For instance, Fox’s ending for A Mountain Europa, in which Easter, in shielding her new husband Clayton from her own father’s bullet, loses her life less than twenty-four hours after her nuptials, is changed in the Realart version to a scene of Easter waking up after the shooting, having only been grazed by the bullet, to decide that she loves the young mountain man in the story, Sherd Haines, rather than civilized Clayton and gives her affections to Sherd in the final moments (18).

Still, by focusing on the film portrayals of Fox’s heroines in these two examples, I can clearly illustrate that Pickford’s reworking of a Fox character was such that the resultant portrayal suited her iconic film persona *more* than Fox’s original character would, because of its spirited, violent and unfettered qualities. Such successful film portrayals, as I will show, led to a prevalence of such characterizations of the mountain girl in film to overshadow any others. As J. W. Williamson argues, film adaptations of mountain stories often played up what he calls the “uppity, democracy-embracing” (19) aspect of “the hillbilly gal,” because, of course, any “action leading to violence, in a hillbilly gal, was often attributed to bad mountain genes or, by extension, to bad mountain neighborhoods” (20).

Mary Miles Minter, over the course of her short career, played many such parts—as Jess Slocum in Her Country’s Call (American/Mutual Star, 1917), who “shoots a dastardly, un-American troublemaker for tearing down an American flag” (21), and Melissa of the Hills (American/Mutual Star, 1917), a daughter of a circuit rider

(preacher), who tries to bring together two feuding mountain families (22). In A Cumberland Romance, a film that still exists in the Library of Congress collection, Minter again plays a gun-wielding-centric mountain girl, based this time on Fox's Easter Hicks. Scott Eyman chooses to hedge his analysis of Minter's performance simply in its comparison to the more skilled and professional Mary Pickford:

The difference between the two actresses is obvious in the plot development of A Cumberland Romance, in which Minter plays a sharpshooting little hillbilly who falls in love with an "outsider." At their wedding, his mother and sister are appalled at their boy marrying such poor white trash. Had A Cumberland Romance been a Pickford picture, her fiancé's relatives would have clearly seen and been impressed by the Pickford beauty, gentility and, for lack of a better word, class. Nor would it have been mere scenario shifting, but a valid difference between Mary's more refined appeal and Minter's personality as revealed by the camera (23).

Despite the fact that Eyman's analysis oversimplifies the differences between Minter and Pickford and is based largely on his personal entertainment tastes, he misses an important point, and one germane to my argument. Minter's characterization of Easter Hicks diverges starkly from Fox's own, in that she "plays a sharpshooting little hillbilly" who comports herself only as so much "poor white trash" (24). Fox's Easter Hicks is no such beast. She uses her gun only to obtain food for her temporarily fatherless family, in one scene having to be persuaded by her fellows to participate in a shooting contest, which will result in a killed turkey for the family table. No "sharpshooting little hillbilly," Easter misses on the first few tries and clearly never takes part in the all-male contest to illustrate her abilities (25). Fox's story also never brings Easter in contact with Clayton's upper-class family, as does the film. In fact, her exposure to the outside world through books and magazines, as provided by Clayton, seem to change her into the perfect and perfectly respectable romantic heroine: "She was simply and prettily dressed in white muslin; a blue ribbon was about her throat, and her hair was gathered in a Psyche knot that accented the classicism of her profile. Her appearance was really refined and tasteful" (26).

Minter's final acclaimed film, an adaptation of Fox's The Trail of the Lonesome Pine (Realart 1923) no longer exists. It would be interesting to see Minter's particular portrayal of Fox's June Tolliver in this film, if only to see whether or not she continued to denigrate the mountain girl type in this role as well.

If Mary Miles Minter can be said to have based many of her roles and characterizations on those of Mary Pickford, it must then be Pickford-on-screen, or the Pickford film persona that had the greatest impact on the mountain girl stereotype. As Williamson notes in Hillybillyland, "Many other young stars had ridden to the top at the box office on a mountain nag, "Little Mary" Pickford first among them [...]. Mary Pickford had played backwoods virgin/hellcat types since at least The Mountaineer's Honor (Biograph) in 1909, but it was The Eagle's Mate (Famous Players, 1914), an epic tale of wild mountain blood and male competition for breeding rights, that sealed her

popularity and hence her wild profitability” (27). Sime Silverman, in a review of the film published in Variety on July 10, 1914, writes

Mary Pickford is one of the few actresses who can interject personality into a negative. She breathes the role taken and it fits her up, down and all around. Peculiar hold a picture will take. Here is this slip of a girl carrying the admiration of millions, and millions of those who would never have seen her if she had become the greatest of \$2 stars on the footlighted stage. The Eagle’s Mate is a lively feature without real kick—but it has Mary Pickford, better than the best kick or punch that could have been put in. (28)

Clearly, her bastardization of the typical mountain girl had here already demonstrated its popularity, its profitability and its effectiveness as a vehicle for Pickford’s film persona. In 1919, Pickford, by this time the head of her own film corporation, kept this evidence in mind when choosing Fox’s novel The Heart of the Hills to adapt to the screen. Fox himself had died that year and so, it seems clear that neither he nor his estate had any compunctions about what the Pickford brand might do to the original story. In terms of plot, it is hardly recognizable, but an examination of that is beyond the scope of this project. More important is what Pickford and her writers have done to innocent Mavis Hawn, possibly one of the most angelic and passive of Fox’s characters.

Pickford’s Heart o’ the Hills begins with two title cards providing background to the story and persuasive rhetoric as to the way in which the characters will be portrayed: “In the heart of the Kentucky Mountains dwells a primitive and picturesque people. Often misunderstood are these simple mountain folk, for theirs is a quaint humor, an elemental courage and a stern code of justice.” The first scene introduces Jason Hawn (here Honeycutt) in much the same manner as Fox does in the novel, as a young man with chores to do, who would rather spend his time fishing. And, like the novel, he seeks out Mavis’ company when he decides to give into the fishing urge. However, it is soon clear that this Jason is not Fox’s. In fact, Pickford’s version morphs Jason and Mavis into one character. Jason’s rebelliousness and spirit seem to have entirely left him and taken up residence in Mavis, for our introduction to this mountain girl comes in a scene in which she’s shown riding a pony round and round a tree, firing shots into a contraption called a belly-band in order to test her marksmanship. The title card says simply: “To shoot straight is the chief aim of the mountain girl, Mavis Hawn.” One of Fox’s characters, teacher John Burnham, is introduced into the scene in order to give the justification for her actions. It soon becomes clear that the grudge Fox has given to Jason in his book—the task of finding and killing his father’s murderer—is given here to Mavis, for the dialogue contained on another title card states: “When I kin hit the belly-band two outer three, I’m a-goin’ to—git him!” With just this brief scene, we can already see and understand the kind of mountain girl Pickford will present—one in keeping with both her film persona and the stereotype of the wildcat hillbilly gal that she has helped to create.

In fact, as the film plays out, Pickford's Mavis kills the owner of a coal mine and her own stepfather (justified, perhaps by his brutal beating of her mother on more than one occasion). She rides at night with an unhooded version of the Ku Klux Klan, called simply "night riders," and puts an end to her mother's authority over her with a slap in the face. Only after Mavis gets the benefit of an education and some time spent at Colonel Pendleton's house in the Bluegrass does she calm down a little, but this calm is obviously contrary to her nature, because the killing of her stepfather happens after this point. In fact, Titus' critique of Fox's Jason, seems to strongly suggest Pickford's portrayal of Mavis: "Jason never quite overcomes a streak of bad temper, and he can be as stubborn as the worst mountain man on occasion" (29).

As I have already tried to show, Fox's Mavis is nothing like this in the novel. Unlettered, shy and unconfident, yes, but never wild or violent. After Mavis comes back to the mountain to live following her education in the Bluegrass (ostensibly Lexington, Kentucky), Fox allows her to assert herself in her relationship with Jason for the first time. Having just come back to the mountain himself, Jason tries to approach Mavis, from whom he has been estranged:

Indeed, some change had taken place that was subtle and extraordinary. He saw his mother deferring to her—leaning on her unconsciously. And old Jason, to the boy's amazement, was less imperious when she was around, moderated his sweeping judgments, looked to her from under his heavy brows, apparently for approval or to see that at least he gave no offence—deferred to her more than to any man or woman within the boy's memory. And Jason himself felt the emanation from her of some new power that was beginning to chain his thoughts to her. (30)

This "new power," however is not backed by violence or anger, but graceful poise and comportment gained through growth and education. Fox's Appalachian heroines never have to resort to such barbaric tactics to achieve their goals. But, as seemingly untrue as Pickford's portrayal was to Fox's Mavis, it suited her own established film persona well. Whitfield notes that "The Heart o' the Hills distills the strength, the aggressive self-possession, that defined Mary Pickford, on and off the screen" (31).

Notes

- (1) Eileen Whitfield, Pickford: The Woman Who Made Hollywood, (Lexington, KY: U of KY P, 1997), 35.
- (2) Quoted in Robert Cushman, Introduction, Mary Pickford Rediscovered: Rare Pictures of a Hollywood Legend. By Kevin Brownlow, (NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999), 17.
- (3) Cushman, 13-14.
- (4) Cushman, 14.
- (5) Kevin Brownlow, The Parade's Gone by,. (NY: Alfred Knopf, 1968), 120.
- (6) Cushman, 24.
- (7) Raymond Lee, The Films of Mary Pickford, (South Brunswick, NJ: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1970), 17.

- (8) Robert K. Klepper, "Mary Miles Minter: Beauty Wronged," [classicimages.com](http://www.classicimages.com/1997/july97/minter.html), July 1997, <<http://www.classicimages.com/1997/july97/minter.html>>
- (9) John Fox, Jr., A Mountain Europa; A Cumberland Vendetta; The Last Stetson, (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 1-116.
- (10) John Fox, Jr., The Heart of the Hills, (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913).
- (11) W. I. Titus, John Fox, Jr., Twayne's United States Authors Series, (NY: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), 26.
- (12) Titus, 29.
- (13) Fox, Jr., The Heart of the Hills, 19.
- (14) Fox, Jr., The Heart of the Hills, 81.
- (15) Fox, Jr., The Mountain Europa, 16-17.
- (16) Charles Maigne, director, A Cumberland Romance, Realart, 1920.
- (17) Joseph de Grasse and Sidney Franklin, directors, Heart o' the Hills, First National, 1919.
- (18) J. W. Williamson, Silent Mountaineers in Silent Films: Plot Synopses of Movies about Moonshining, Feuding and Other Mountain Topics, 1904-1929, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1994), 254-55.
- (19) J. W. Williamson, Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains & What the Mountains Did to the Movies, (Chapel Hill, NC: U of NC P, 1995), 235.
- (20) J. W. Williamson, Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains & What the Mountains Did to the Movies, 233.
- (21) J. W. Williamson, Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains & What the Mountains Did to the Movies, 233.
- (22) J. W. Williamson, Silent Mountaineers in Silent Films: Plot Synopses of Movies about Moonshining, Feuding and Other Mountain Topics, 1904-1929, 228.
- (23) Scott Eyman, Mary Pickford: America's Sweetheart, (NY: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1990), 118-119.
- (24) Scott Eyman, Mary Pickford: America's Sweetheart, (NY: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1990), 118-119.
- (25) Fox, Jr. A Mountain Europa, 30-31.
- (26) Fox, Jr. A Mountain Europa, 96.
- (27) J. W. Williamson, Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains & What the Mountains Did to the Movies, 180.
- (28) Sime Silverman, Review of The Eagle's Mate, Variety, (July 10, 1914), 20.
- (29) Titus, 104.
- (30) Fox, Jr., The Heart of the Hills, 360-1.
- (31) Whitfield, 196.

Dora's Story: A Daughter of Vaughan

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Abstract

The ability to capture moments of life and give them back as vivid images of events, people and places is a wonderful gift. This has been the legacy of Dora, born in May, 1919, next-to-last of Eliza's eight children. Dora's lively recall of growing up in Vaughan, West Virginia, credits reading, a mother of faith and dedication, and a strong belief in education for lifting her out of the often life-sucking poverty in the deep Nicholas County mountains. Now 88, Dora remains an inspiration to her two daughters (one a doctor, one a lawyer/professor) to her grandchildren and great-granddaughter, and to many others she mentored along the way. Her stories keep Vaughan alive.

* * *

At the age of 85, Dora journeyed to Summersville, West Virginia, and met her first grade teacher. "Imagine," Dora kept saying, "someone my age getting to meet their first grade teacher after all this time." And it was, truly, an amazing occurrence. Miss Dotson (who became Mrs. Humphreys), was in her late 90s, tall, thin, but standing very erect with bright shiny eyes. She was just as delighted as Dora at the meeting. "You were such a pretty thing," she said to Dora, "and I think the smartest child I ever knew." She went on telling stories about some of the other children in the class and telling about her life after teaching. The meeting, arranged by Dora's sister Artha, 96, was a pleasant hour or so on a summer afternoon. Miss Dotson died not long after that. She had been about age 15 at the time she taught at Vaughan Free School, and we learned that was her only year of teaching. She married, moved away, and began her own family. Dora later commented, "Why couldn't she have told me then how smart she thought I was?" She added, "that might have made a difference."

Dora was—is—very smart, and by anyone's standards, as her high school yearbook picture shows, a beautiful woman. Her wistfulness, after that visit with Miss Dotson, came from thinking that positive comments from her teacher at that time given her a boost in self confidence. At 5 feet 1 inch, and weighing about 100 pounds through to middle adulthood, Dora was small in stature, but big in heart—and she could be feisty if called upon to do so.

The Early Years

The seventh child born to Eliza and Oscar Lucas, Dora came into the world in May, 1919, in the deep mountain village of Vaughan, West Virginia. The town at one point had been a thriving center of logging activity, and boasted a post office, train station, two stores, two churches and a central area with large two-story wood-framed houses. It was, in fact, a company town built by the West Virginia Lumber Company. Dora's father, however, was not linked to the logging industry except as a

kind of subcontractor. His occupation has been listed as “driver.” His family owned horses and Oscar, along with his father and several brothers, came into Vaughan from southern Ohio to work. Logging and mining in the region kept it alive, although the old growth forests were played out by the 1920s.

“It was almost like we were two separate families,” Dora said many times. “The older ones were gone by the time Kay [the youngest sister, two years from Dora] and I came along, so we grew up apart from them.” She has often commented about how free they were and how unafraid. “We could walk anywhere—down the road to a friend’s house, up the mountain to Tressie’s (her oldest sister, married with children)—and not worry about anything.”

Stories from her early life reveal a closeness to Eliza, her mom, and an awareness of the world around her. Going to pick berries was a fond memory. “I don’t know where Kay must have been,” Dora said, “but Mom and I would go way, way back over the mountain behind the house, to pick blueberries, we called them huckleberries. Sometimes Mom would take one of the horses with a bucket hung on each side. I would pick my berries in a tin cup—so I could tell when I had some,” she laughs.

The “slicky rock” was back that same way up the hill, following the creek that came down the hollow behind the house. “You could take an old coat—or just about anything—and sit down on it and slide a long way,” Dora said. Certainly a grand time for children. The rock formation was under the creek, and was covered with moss or algae. The running water kept it in perfect condition for a great slide.

Dora also tells the tale of two chickens that someone gave her as pets. She doesn’t remember what happened to one of them, but one was indeed a pet that she carried around and was quite fond of. That hen slept out in the coal house, as the story goes, and one day a load of coal was dumped on top of where she was nesting. “Of course I went crying to Mom, telling her she had to come and do something,” Dora said. “Well, Mom got something and pried one of the boards loose on the side of the coal house near where we thought the hen was. Wouldn’t you know that old hen hopped right out, shook her feathers out, and walked away!” It seems there was a large lump of coal that created a barrier and kept the bird from being squashed.

Another time Dora was with Eliza in the large vegetable garden her Mom kept to provide the family with tomatoes, corn, squash, potatoes and other sustenance. As Eliza hoed, Dora’s attention was captured by a large rabbit edging into the lettuce patch. Much to Dora’s horror, a snake came out of the bushes and swallowed the rabbit whole---“Mom, Mom,” Dora cried, “you have to do something!” Once again Eliza came to the rescue, taking her hoe and killing the snake. But this time, she was too late. As she pulled the rabbit from inside the snake, they could see it had smothered.

There weren’t many toys around for the children to play with—in fact, Dora remembers only one—a doll, given to her by her (next-to-oldest) sister Artha. Dora and Kay (at about ages five and seven) are shown in one of the few photographs of their childhood, dangling the dolls that Artha gave them. Dora said she sometimes pretended her doll was a girl and at those times, her name was Carol Jean. When the doll was a pretend boy doll, his name was Jimmy Dale. Sister Tressie’s young

children later tried feeding the dolls people food. This caused the material to mold, and rot—so the dolls had to be thrown away.

It is believed that Dora had a polio-like illness around age six or seven. She suffered weakness and pain in her legs, and one leg drew up. Eliza heated Epsom Salts and put warm compresses on her legs. She carried Dora up the stairs to bed at night, and massaged her legs with a salve. The pain in her legs was so bad that she couldn't stand the covers to touch them at night. She remembers her mother being with her to lift the blankets and ease her pain. Eliza could not have known of the treatments Sister Elizabeth Kenny in Australia was using for polio some ten years earlier, but her common sense approach was the same, and had good results: use of hot compresses eased the pain and loosened the muscles so that they could function again.

People Coming and Going

Oscar, Dora's Dad, was from a family of 15 children, a number of whom came from southern Ohio into West Virginia at the same time he did. Eliza promised her own mother that she would take over care of her four brothers and sisters when the mom died while the children were young. So family was all around, coming and going, along with visits from friends and neighbors.

Aunt Stella, one of Oscar's sisters, was a favorite of Dora's. She remembers one election day—which was also the 4th of July—when Dora got to stay with Aunt Stella while everyone else was off to vote or do chores. Aunt Stella made Dora a special lunch of creamed tomatoes on biscuits. “Just like for a big person,” Dora said. “She made me feel very special. When we sat down to lunch she said, ‘We don't care who gets elected, do we Dory?’” To this day, Dora has fond memories of her Aunt Stella when she eats creamed tomatoes.

Aunt Stella had rather bad varicose veins and on one occasion cut her leg and was bleeding profusely. Eliza was at Tressie's house helping with her children and Dora was sent to fetch her. Tressie's house was 'round on Rippetoe mountain, a good distance for young Dora to go. She took off, running to get her mother, and frightened because she was afraid Aunt Stella was going to die. When she got to her mother, as Dora reports it, “I was really a mess. I was crying and upset and could barely tell mom what was wrong. Before Mom left to check on Aunt Stella, she sat me down and calmly told me not to be afraid.” Dora said, reflecting on that story years later, she understood that Eliza was smart enough to know that if the cut were bad enough and they didn't get the bleeding stopped, Stella would probably be beyond saving when she got there. But what she told Dora was, “Don't worry, Stella is a good woman. If it's her time to go, she's ready.” The incident left quite an impression on a young Dora—of faith, of belief, and of love—that her mother cared enough to calm her fears, before going off to help her sister.

When Aunt Sarah came to visit every summer, now that was a different story. Sarah was Oscar's oldest sister and she had taken it upon herself to be the family barber—at least for Dora and Kay, when she arrived in Vaughan. Dora says her hair would just about grow out to where she liked it, when Sarah would come and chop off the bangs and shape up the bowl cut. Now one theory has developed, that perhaps Eliza set Sarah onto the barber duty just to keep her out of the kitchen, but this isn't certain.

Years later when Dora was married with two young children, she and her husband took Oscar back to the family farm in Ohio to visit. Oscar, as the oldest son, was the rightful heir to the farm. He, however, had turned it down to stay in Vaughan, and Sarah became the owner. On the occasion of the visit, Sarah cooked a large pot of chicken and dumplings for her guests, and to this day, Dora describes how frightened she was that one of her daughters might choke on the tiny bones that Sarah had left in the stew. "Who would ever leave all the chicken bones in the food when they serve it?" Dora asks? Now whether Aunt Sarah was nervous about the farm ownership, or whether she just wasn't a good cook (and thus the assignment to hair-cutting duty to get her out of the kitchen), we'll never know. Everyone survived the dinner, however, and the visitors returned to West Virginia.

Uncle Jack was one of Eliza's uncles. He came to visit one day with a true tale of woe. "My sleep has been taken from me," he told Eliza. He explained that he had not been asleep in quite some time and he didn't know how to deal with this problem. No matter what he tried, sleep simply would not come. Eliza went into the kitchen to fix him something to eat. When she came back with his plate of food," Dora says, "Uncle Jack was sound asleep."

"There were no fast food places in those days," Dora explains, "you had to eat with someone you knew, stop by someone's house along the way who might offer you something to eat." It's not difficult to imagine Eliza's household being one of those places where people could expect to be fed. With her expansive garden, the cow she always kept, the bacon, ham and other products when the occasional hog was slaughtered---Eliza did keep food on the table for her family—and guests. Dora remembers that there was always a pot of beans cooking on the back of the wood stove in the kitchen. "Mom would get up, make the coffee, keep the stove going, and keep the pot of beans simmering." There was often crisp cornbread or freshly made biscuits to go with the beans.

One of the travelers who stopped by the house one day when Dora was young (and impressionable) was Duke Nottingham. When Eliza asked if he would like something to eat, he protested mightily and said he simply couldn't eat a thing, he wasn't at all hungry. When Eliza asked again, he allowed as how he might eat a little something, but he really wasn't hungry at all. Dora watched as Mr. Nottingham ate, and ate, and ate, and ate. "I sure would hate to see you eat if you *were* hungry," she told him. Eliza left Dora with the distinct impression that she was not ever to be rude to guests again.

Uncle Gillespie, was another of Eliza's uncles, and it was to his house Dora was taken to stay for a while when she was very young. Dora doesn't remember why. But while she was there, she went about a mile away to stay with Cornelius' son and his wife. "I was supposed to stay there with them that night," Dora reports, "but they started quarreling. I don't know what they were fighting about, but I told them I just couldn't stay in a house where people were quarreling." So Dora went out the door and started back down the railroad tracks to Uncle Gillespie's house. The son left the quarrel and walked down the tracks with her. "Two or three times in my life I really surprised myself," Dora said. "Where did I get my courage? I was just a little 'ole thing."

Aunt Nan wasn't anyone's relative, but everyone called her "Aunt." She was a very wrinkled, leathery old woman, and Eliza always said that Aunt Nan came to Vaughan as an old woman. No one, not even Nan knew how old she was. She could have been Indian, or part Indian. She knew a lot about roots and herbs and shared her knowledge with Eliza. She also smoked a corn-cob pipe. Once when Dora had a severe ear ache, Aunt Nan blew smoke in her ears as therapy. The warm smoke felt good, Dora says, but isn't sure if the infection or the cure might have contributed to her hearing loss in later life. The favorite Aunt Nan story was always the one about her husband, Frank. Frank was left on the door step at Aunt Nan's remote mountain cabin way off from everyone else. The baby had a cleft palate and never learned to speak clearly. Aunt Nan raised him, and when he got to be about 30 years old, she married him. And so, as Nan was known to remark, that's the way to get the kind of husband you want, just raise him up and marry him. Dora was fond of Aunt Nan and Frank. "Frank never spoke to very many people," Dora said, "but he would talk to me. I tried to teach him how to read. I would go visit and sit and explain the words to him. He did learn to read a little bit." One of Dora's favorite memories of Aunt Nan was that every time Dora would say, "Thank you," to Nan for something, Nan's response was always the same: "Yeah, I got a whole barrel full of those at home and they aren't doing me a bit of good."

Off to School

Dora began school at the age of five. She learned to read much earlier than that—but isn't sure just how old she was when she began reading. She read anything and everything she could find, and some of the visitors and relatives did not think it proper for her to read some of the magazines and books they saw her with. Eliza's words of wisdom to her daughter let her know that her mother shared a genuine love of reading: "Read what you want to Dory, your mind is selective." Those words have been passed on further than family, but most certainly from mother to daughter to daughters. As Dora explained, "She meant, you know, that whatever I could read, my mind would sift out the bad stuff." And Eliza was right. The bad stuff, the trashy stuff, the poorly written stuff--was soon left behind, not remembered, and certainly never up there among the first choices for reading matter.

In addition to special memories of Miss Dotson, her first grade teacher, Dora remembers feeling very good about "turning down" her cousin Frank in a spelling bee, at one of the later grades in the Vaughan school. He was several years older, which made the victory even sweeter. The word, Dora remembers to this day, was "restaurant."

The Vaughan Free School where all the children went in grades one-through-eight, was a three-room frame building, located between the Twenty-Mile creek and the railroad tracks. The dirt road that stretched between Vaughan and Lizemores ran adjacent to the creek, and a log bridge provided a path over the creek to the school.

Another memory of those early school years was of taking a test, some sort of general knowledge test, that involved children of various levels at the same time. Dora's brother Pat, two years older, tried to get Dora to tell him some answers. Dora was too afraid of being caught—and didn't want to cheat. She does remember her brother muttering under his breath to her, "Gosh dangit—I'll git you when we git home." Dora said thankfully he forgot about it before they got back home.

Dora finished the eighth grade in Vaughan and the next school year started to ninth grade in Gauley Bridge, some 23 miles away. She tried riding the train, she tried staying with different people that Eliza knew—but, for various reasons, nothing worked out. She completed about three months, and then went back home to Vaughan. Two stories from her school experience there might give some indication why she really didn't want to stay there. One of the teachers gave her the first bad grade she had ever received. It was a kind of recreation/physical education class and it was mandated that Dora turn cartwheels and summersaults. She could do neither. She tried and tried. She doesn't know whether it was the effects of the suspected polio or just lack of coordination—but she couldn't pull off the activities. The teacher gave her a "WD" for her evaluation in the grading period she was there. This interpreted as "grade withheld" until she could perform the activities.

Riding the train was a fun experience for Dora. The train conductor liked Dora and knew that she didn't have much money. So, when Dora would hand him her coins, he would take them, shuffle them around in his hands, and then give Dora the same money back again. He did it with such skill that onlookers could not have guessed that Dora wasn't just getting change back.

Another story from her three months at Gauley Bridge High School was playing the circle game called "Swat the Kaiser." The time period would have been during 1932. Dora remembers that the students gathered in a circle while one student would run around the outside and do the "swatting." One student swatted Dora extra hard—and so Dora ran all the way around the circle to swat that student equally hard. (You were supposed to swat the person next to you, Dora said.) At any rate, a few weeks later the students participated in an activity in which they were supposed to tell what they thought of other students. The girl involved in the swatting incident reported that "Dora is nice enough, but she has to get even." Another example of Dora's inner spunk.

Back home in Vaughan, Dora tried to figure out how she could finish high school. Without transportation, the distance to Nicholas County High in Summersville or to Clay County High in Clay might as well have been a million miles away. She was determined, though, and so was Eliza, for they worked it out so that Dora could stay with older sister Velma (always called Billie)—where she became a kind of housekeeper and maid, and was able to complete school. So Dora traveled off to West Virginia's largest city for her next adventure.

When she entered the ninth grade at West Junior High School in Huntington, in 1933, she met and made life-long friends at school and at the Second Presbyterian Church, which she began attending. The church had a very active youth group and an involved minister who made the young people feel accepted.

When she reached high school age, Dora got to attend a state conference with that church group in Lewisburg, WV, where they stayed in the dormitories of the Greenbrier Military Academy. She also got to visit the famous Greenbrier Hotel and Resort. "I couldn't imagine anything so grand," Dora said. "Just looking at some of the things in the gift shop, I was afraid to breathe—thinking if I did I might break something." Being selected to attend that meeting was very special to Dora and she shared stories from her experiences there for many years. She also encouraged her own daughters to go and do likewise whenever they had the opportunity.

High school brought more adventures and more good friends. Dora continued living with Billie and her husband in West Huntington, and walked the two-and-a-half miles to school and back each day. Because of over-crowding, classes were scheduled for each student on a half-day basis. Dora attended school in the afternoons her first year, then mornings in the 11th and 12th grades. She studied hard, she worked hard at Billie's apartment doing laundry, dishes and cleaning, and she loved school. She took college-preparatory courses—her plan was to enter nurse's training after high school. Finding out one day that she had been assigned to a very cantankerous teacher's Latin class, Dora went to her old Latin teacher to ask if there might be room for her to switch to this teacher's class. The response: "I'll make room for you even if I have to seat you in the window." Once again Dora found support to keep on with her education.

During her high school years Dora also was able to work taking care of children for several families who paid her to baby sit. One family, with an exceptionally difficult infant, took Dora with them for the summer to a house in Marmet, West Virginia. Dora said she was never certain if the baby had difficulties or if he just had a difficult mother. She remembers the family being nice and that she appreciated the opportunity for a summer job.

Life After High School

Dora graduated from Huntington High school in May, 1937. She found a job working at Bailey's cafeteria in downtown Huntington and was able to move out of her sister's apartment into a rooming house where she shared a room with a friend. The difficult part was saving for nurse's training. The RN program she hoped to enter at the hospital in Huntington would not permit students-in-training to work. This meant Dora had to save enough to pay for tuition and books, plus living expenses for the two years she would be in the program. For three years Dora worked and tried very hard to save as much of her \$3 per week salary as she could. At the end of that time her savings had reached the \$100 mark—still not enough.

All was not hard work and no fun, though. Dora kept close to her good friends from the church that she still attended, and her friends in the rooming house, "Miss Mattie's." One friend worked at the potato chip factory and got to bring home all the broken ones—Dora says she can never eat a potato chip without thinking of that friend and her family. Another friend worked a late shift at a nearby restaurant and always shared the coffee that was left at the end of the day. Singing and pranks and good laughter were shared. Dora remembers spending the night with several friends at one of their homes. "How does your mother stand us singing "Corine, Corina" at 2 a.m.?" Dora asked her friend. "I think she just likes to see us enjoy ourselves," her friend Frances said.

Dora Meets Clay

It isn't surprising that they found each other—both descended from the early American settlers from the British Isles. Dora's ancestors came into America through Virginia and on over into the mountains. Clay's ancestors were skilled craftsmen who came into Connecticut and on into the lower Ohio valley. Both Dora and Clay were short in stature, blue-eyed, fair-skinned, with keen intelligence, a love of language and sharp perceptions in a number of ways. Clay had spotted Dora's photo in his sister's high

school yearbook and wanted to meet her. They were introduced by mutual friends—and so their story began.

Clay had grown up in Cabell County on the family farm and had moved to Huntington with his family. He attended Marshall College after high school and went on to complete skilled training at the Coyne Electrical School in Chicago. When Dora met him he was working as an electrician for a local contractor, and he also taught the apprentice class at the trades school. He fell in love with his Dora and wanted to marry her.

Dora did not want to get married. She was determined to work, save her money and go into nurse's training. She wanted to help her mother and dad, and make life easier for them. "But we can help them," Clay would counter. In the end, Clay was very persuasive. Dora's work situation deteriorated at the cafeteria, her savings just would not grow, try as she might, and she finally yielded. They were listening to the radio one evening—to one of Dora's favorite songs, "Danny Boy." Dora remarked that she had always wanted to have a baby boy and name him "Danny." Clay's response, "Can he be my Danny boy, too?"

And so they were wed in August, 1940. Clay kept his promise. Dora took her savings and spent \$50 for materials for Clay to wire the house in Vaughan and finally bring electricity to Oscar and Eliza. The other \$50 of Dora's savings went to buy an electric radio for Eliza—her old battery-operated one was on its last leg. Together over time they were able to re-roof the house, paint it inside, and make other improvements. But Dora remarked many years later, she realized that her hopes of giving her mother a really nice house and providing her with comfortable things meant far more to Dora than to Eliza. "Mom appreciated all we did," Dora said, "but she just didn't care so much about things."

In December, not long after they were married, Clay and Dora were traveling to South Charleston to visit one of Dora's sisters. The car Clay was driving, a 1937 Willey's coupe, became stuck on the railroad tracks—he could not get the car to move. Both Clay and Dora were fortunate to get out and stand clear, as a train struck the car broadside, and carried it some distance down the tracks. They were able to get a ride back to Huntington later on that night—on another train. After it was all over, Dora expressed regret that Clay had lost the car that he shared with his Dad. Clay said that the car could be replaced, "But I still have my Dora." Dora said recently that things always seem to happen for a reason. The Studebaker that Clay bought to replace the car lost in the accident lasted them throughout the war.

Clay went to work in Dallas, Texas, for a while when work became scarce that next year in Huntington. He wrote letters back to Dora—the only time he was ever known to express himself in writing. Dora knew she was loved and missed. When Clay came back, he had a job waiting for him in Dallas. But it seems Dora had just washed, stretched and re-hung the curtains in the kitchen. She just hated taking them down again. Clay didn't really want to take the curtains down, either. And so they stayed in West Virginia.

A daughter was born in August, 1941, named after their favorite song—but with a slight alteration. Clay had seen a street named, "Danna" while he was in Dallas. A second daughter, Jeanne, arrived two years later, in 1943. Clay's employment as an electrician was classified as a "necessary civilian occupation," and he was able to remain with his family and not be sent to the battlefields in Europe or the South Pacific.. He

remained in Huntington, often traveling to work sites up and down the Ohio River, and to construction sites in various places. Many years later, he was proud to receive his “60-year” pin from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and left his imprint on many buildings, power plants and production facilities in the middle Ohio valley—as a job foreman, worker and sometimes designer.

Dora’s Career

Dora was not employed outside the home but she did go on to get additional schooling and training. She took classes in typing and shorthand, and in dressmaking and tailoring, and was able to put these skills to use in various ways. She also was a lifelong learner—absorbing information, reading, discussing and sharing information with others. She developed a reputation for knowing what to do—and neighbors would often turn to her when they needed help. Dora’s sister Billie made fun of the gift Dora bought Clay on their first Christmas. She could see no use for the *Webster’s Complete Unabridged Dictionary* Dora purchased. That volume, and the set of Collier’s Encyclopedias (with accompanying Children’s Classics collection) give indication some 60 years later of just how extensively used they were by the family.

On one occasion a neighbor child told her parents, “Call Mrs. Swan and ask her what I can eat.” Dora’s response to that was that she always took her daughters to their regular doctor appointments and she listened to what was said. “In many ways I got to be a nurse without ever going through training,” Dora said once. This was true. She helped with a number of homebound patients through the years, and was a good and faithful friend. She was able to stay and care for her mother, Eliza, in her last week of life. And she was able to be with her youngest sister and life-long friend, Kay, in her last months as she lost her battle with lung-to-bone cancer.

Dora was also a fighter when that was called for. She worked with other parents at the elementary school her daughters attended to see that all the children had proper clothing and shoes. When parents whose children lived in the eastern section of Huntington were told that their sons and daughters would have to attend Barboursville High School (a seven-mile bus ride) in another incorporated area—Dora was among those petitioning and attending school board meetings to get the decision overturned. She was outraged that students would be forced to attend a school outside the city limits when their parents lived and paid taxes in Huntington. She shared the outrage with others and they won their battle.

Dora also had a reputation for her cleverness in helping to create projects for school—or think of topics that young children could take and run with—when they had exhausted their own resources. More than one youngster knocked at the door and asked for help. She would never do the work for any of them—but her encouragement and suggestions worked miracles.

Dora was close to a number of children throughout her years. She named her nephew, Jimmy Dale, Clarice’s son, and was very close to him during the time he spent in Vaughan as a young child. She took care of her niece and nephew when she stayed at her sister Billie’s house, and helped with them later as well. She babysat with several children when she was in high school, spending one summer with a family and caring for their infant. Her secret to successful childcare was that she could make playthings out of anything. Rocks and sticks could become cowboys and Indians, and puppets and dolls

could be created from string and bits of cloth. She attracted young children in the neighborhood after her own children went away to college. She would sit on the front or back porch telling stories or sometimes listening to a child read.

Dora also spent eight years as a teacher in the nursery program at Baptist Temple church in Huntington, where she served along side her good friend Doris—sharing laughter and tears over the travails of life and the children in the nursery. “I don’t think the parents could ever guess what things their children shared with us at Sunday school,” Dora once said. “Who could guess how much information little ones can convey—in a lot of different ways.”

Her own grandchildren grew to love and appreciate their “Bawma’s” ability to tell stories. Jeanne’s two daughters, and Dannie’s two sons stayed with their grandparents at various times and loved getting to know them. Dannie’s oldest son at the age of three would rush to meet the car as Dora and Clay arrived in Morgantown. Taking his Bawma by the hand as she got out of the car, his request would be, “Please tell me some stories out of your head.” For her first granddaughter’s third Christmas Dora created a doll house with tiny furnishings, little rugs and curtains, and a family of tiny people she made out of string. She named them the Blanket family. She said to her granddaughter, “This is Mama Blanket and Daddy Blanket, and who would this be? (holding up a tiny baby).” Kristen’s response, with a huge smile on her face, “Baby Blanket! Even though the grandchildren grew up a distance from Huntington, at various times in Chicago, Pittsburgh and Morgantown, they were close to their Papa Clay and Bawma Dora, and always had them in their lives and memories.

Dora’s Legacy

If Eliza’s love of reading and education were visited upon Dora, then certainly that same love was passed along to Dora’s daughters and their children. Dannie perhaps said it best when she remarked, “Mother never would do anything for us, in terms of school work or projects, but neither would she just allow us to let it go. She was there, helping us fight the good fight. She would bring us a cup of tea when we didn’t want to stay awake to study anymore, or give us encouragement in so many ways.”

Both daughters have illustrations of that incredible tenacity that Dora had—just a downright ornery unwillingness to give up. For Dannie, it was that crazy soap making project. She was working on a science project in high school that involved creating soap from fat. She went through the whole process of rendering the fat, cooking it, stirring and stirring and stirring. At some point glycerin was added. And nothing happened. It had been a long involved project, she had made extensive notes, everything was done exactly like it was supposed to be. And nothing happened. Dannie was worn out. “It’s just not going to work. I just can’t get it to work,” she cried, and she was really ready to give up. Dora encouraged her. She told her to just stir it a bit more. She picked up the wooden spoon and gave it one more stir---and it became soap.

As for education—the little family that Dora and Clay began has now earned 20 college degrees among the eight family members. Two daughters, two sons-in-law, two granddaughters and two grandsons, have collectively earned five doctoral degrees, seven master’s degrees, and eight bachelor’s degrees. An additional doctoral degree is currently in progress.

Beyond accumulating degrees, the family has also traveled extensively and been gainfully employed beyond what might have been predicted, in medicine, education and law. Dora and Clay were proud of their own efforts in visiting all of the United States, except Hawaii, and all of the Canadian provinces. They also drove the Alcan Highway twice, from Dawson Springs to Fairbanks and return, and visited two World Fairs. Their stories of people they met and places visited along the way enriched a lot of other lives as well.

Perhaps most important have been the gifts that Dora has given back in stories, in encouragement and in many kinds of support for her family and others. When Dannie and Jeanne were very small, if one of them became sick, that child was allowed to hold Dora's special locket, an engagement gift from Clay. It was a round gold locket with single diamond setting. Inside were tiny pictures of Dora and Clay. As Dora's daughters got older, they realized that it would be difficult to decide who should inherit that locket—so they agreed with Dora that it would go to the first granddaughter. Jeanne's daughter Kristen inherited the locket—and wore it on her wedding day. A few years later, a great-grand daughter was born, named Mia Dora. This lively, bright, and of course beautiful, young child has a wonderful heritage to learn about. And some of the richest and best part of that heritage came from Vaughan.

MOUNTAIN MAMAS, GEOGRAPHY, AND THE RHETORIC OF APPALACHIAN IDENTITY

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Abstract

In American Women's Studies and Feminist Theory, feminists have thoroughly addressed the ways in which motherhood, identity, and imagery are linked to gender roles and constructs. Yet, these larger structures have not been applied to analysis of images of Appalachian women as mothers; as with all feminist theory, the macro does not always account for or fit with the micro climates of oppression, discrimination, and stereotyping. This essay examines the structures and occurrences of "traditional" images of motherhood, paying close attention to images generated by dominant culture that have the power to define and prescribe the parameters of motherhood as an identity in Appalachia.

Almost heaven, West Virginia
Blue ridge mountains, Shenandoah river
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, blowing like a breeze

Country roads, take me home
To the place, I belong
West Virginia, mountain momma
Take me home, country roads
John Denver *Take Me Home, Country Roads*ⁱ

John Denver's 1971 hit single "Take Me Home, Country Roads" is a ballad that marks a return to Appalachia; although his lyrical depiction of the West Virginian portion of Appalachia is geographically tenuous (the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah River are only within a small portion of the state at the very tip of the Eastern Panhandle), the song is tremendously popular, representing for people worldwide the journey home. Written by Bill Danoff and Taffy Nivert, *Country Roads* envisions Appalachia as a place of both magnificent natural beauty and familial homecoming. Remarkably, the song also invokes two complex visual histories that have come to be associated with Appalachia, the landscape and mothers, a kind of feminized nature or naturalized femininity. "Mountain momma" collapses into one phrase two complex Western traditions whose visual manifestations across time have linked reproduction to the fertility of land.

The Landscape and the Mountaineer

Pictorial language that exalts land as a site of identity and destiny is part of a larger literary and visual tradition in American history. Denver's sings of a belonging, a return to a place of origin and identity. The mythical landscape—with its winding roads, mountains, and misty horizons—is a place of family, love, and longed-for cultural practices. "Almost heaven," a West Virginia state motto that once appeared on license

plates and welcome signs at the state borders, is an extension of this myth of a transcendent landscape. The mountain is an ancient metaphor for humanity's proximity to the gods, appearing in the organic and mountainous shape of the second millennium BCE megalithic carving of Hammurabi's code, the journey for truth's end by the Mesopotamian king of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the biblical story of Moses receiving the laws from the Jewish God on Mount Sinai, the religious and funerary architecture of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt in the forms of ziggurats, mastabas, and pyramids, and the four sacred mountains of the Navajo creation story associated with the geography of the American Southwest. Mountains make sense, in spiritual terms, as sites where humans can bring themselves physically closer to their pantheons. Yet, the spiritual resonance of the mountains of Appalachia differs depending on the American. For the Appalachian, the mountains are the glue of cultural identity. For America, they are the geography of difference—sometimes economic and sometimes cultural—impeding and restricting Westward expansion in the early period of the nation, acting as a collection depot for highway taxes on Appalachian toll roads, and disappearing as former landmarks of coal veins. For the song writers of *Country Roads*, mountains are the loved ones to which we return, embracing us in a timeless state.

Appalachians have long identified themselves as “mountaineers.” Anthony Harkins, in his book *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon*, analyzes the history of the mountaineer and argues that its visage morphs into the hillbilly in response to changing racial, economic, and national identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While the mountaineer is an inaugural cultural icon of the American frontier and the expansion westward, eventually he changes into the symbol of a degenerate people. Harkins writes:

Beginning in the 1880s and accelerating rapidly in the 1890s, however, a strikingly different conception of the region developed—a notion that the people of the southern Appalachian mountains (and eventually of the southern mountains more generally) were not just out of step with but actually were a threat to civilization. The new ideological construction of mountains as a land of lawlessness, cursed by twin “evils” of “moonshining” and “feuding,” was not entirely without foundation.ⁱⁱ

The mountaineer, according to Harkins, becomes the hillbilly as stories from the mountain tragedy and crime circulate nationally through journals and newspapers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. At this moment, new portrayals of Appalachian women also emerge, first in depictions of Ozarks families and then as representative figures for women of both regions (The *Beverly Hillbillies*, according to Anthony Harkins, was initially based on a family from West Virginia and who was rewritten as a family from the Ozarks. Apparently, the geographic difference and distance had little impact on the characters' identities). There are essentially two figures, the overly fecund, sexually available young woman and the overly reproductive, sexually used-up aged woman. I will address the second of these two in this essay. First, we must look at the rhetorical history of the land as it evolves as a symbol for regional identity because ultimately, women and land operate dialectically as symbols of Appalachia's fertility and exploitation.

Often, the moniker “mountaineer” is invoked by contemporary Appalachians in order to move past the potent rhetoric associated with the hillbilly. Yet even in this attempt to side step the problematic imagery associated with hillbilly, the negative associations remain attached. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s first entry for the term “mountaineer,” a mountaineer is a person of the mountains who is “occasionally” believed to be backward:

1. a. A person who is native to or lives in a mountainous region; (occas.) such a person regarded as ignorant, uncivilized, or uneducated; (U.S.) a hillbilly. Cf. MOUNTAIN MAN n. 1a.ⁱⁱⁱ

A mountaineer, then, is someone native to an isolated, mountainous region and who sometimes appears to be lagging behind the rest of the modern world. This so-called backwardness is also embraced by Appalachians as a sort of freedom. West Virginians call themselves “mountaineers” and the West Virginia state seal bears the motto “*Montani Semper Liberi*” which translates as “mountaineers are always free.” *Country Roads*, when invoking the nostalgia and freedom of a West Virginia homecoming—no matter how inaccurate the myth is when examined in light of geography or the songwriters’ “authentic” knowledge of Appalachia—also invokes these rhetorical layers of Appalachian identity linked simultaneously through land, stereotype, and gender.

The Mountaineer and Literature

The literary tradition depicting Appalachians, as well as produced by them, has received much scholarly attention in the past half century by Appalachian Studies scholars. Perhaps the most important collection of primary sources is W. K. McNeil’s anthology *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, first published in 1989. Included among some twenty primary sources on Appalachian culture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are essays and letters written by *Harper’s Magazine* and *Lippincott’s Magazine* contributor Will Wallace Harney, Berea College President William Goodell Frost, and Kentucky novelist John Fox, Jr. All three authors’ works offer insight into the “nature” of Appalachia as told through descriptions of the people, their isolation, and their material culture. Harney, using the descriptive language of observation of the Enlightenment explorer remarks on both the physiognomy of nature and humans in the region, alternately judges and offers empathy for the people whom he encounters. Harney writes:

We passed a poor man with five little children—the eldest ten or twelve, the youngest four or five—their little stock on a small donkey, footing their way over the hills across Tennessee into Georgia. It was so pitiful to see the poor little babes-in-the-wood on that forlorn journey; and yet they were so brave, and the poor fellow cheered them and praised them, as well he might.^{iv}

Berea College President Frost offers similar insights into the “spirit” of the Appalachian in his Romanticization of the isolated Appalachian for the benefit of a New England audience—one upon which he depended and was courting for enrollment in his college. Characterizing Appalachian backwardness as kind of purity that evolved because of the isolation of its peoples, Frost writes: “In examining social life, and its variations in the mountains, we discover a new kind of isolation, a higher potency of loneliness. The

people are not only isolated from the great centres and thoroughfares of the world, but also isolated from one another.”^v Frost, in his essay called “The Southern Mountaineer” first printed in 1901 in *Scribner’s Magazine*, sketched out the material and cultural character of Appalachians for his readers. Frost wrote:

So, in the log cabin of the Southern mountaineer, in his household furnishings, in his homespun, his linsey and, occasionally, in his hunting shirt, his coon-skin cap and moccasins one may summon up the garb and life of the pioneer; in his religion, his politics, his moral code, his folk songs and his superstitions one may bridge the waters back to the old country, and through his speech one may even touch the remote past of Chaucer. For to-day he is a distinct remnant of Colonial times—a distinct relic of an Anglo-Saxon past.^{vi}

The mountaineer was a creature of the earth, a romantic fantasy of white-man in his primitive state. For Harney, he was the tragic figure of isolation and poverty. For Frost, he was the heroic mountain man who remained untouched by the filth of slavery. And for Fox, he was the anecdotal character how lived anachronistically as a pioneer, a backward contemporary of inventions such as the telegram, telephone, and automobile.

Horace Kephart, in his 1914 book *Our Southern Highlands*, begins chapter three by describing his Appalachia as a kind of Eden:

For a long time my chief interest was not in human neighbors, but in the mountains themselves—in that mysterious beckoning hinterland which rose right back of my chimney and spread upward, outward, almost to three cardinal points of the compass, mile after mile, hour after hour of lusty climbing—an Eden still unpeopled and unspoiled.

There is a wealth of secondary literature that analyzes the history, sociological roots, and power of Appalachian identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Two of the most important works that relate these identities to visual culture are Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford’s 1999 *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes* and Anthony Harkins’s 2004 *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon*. Much of the scholarship from the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* and the *Appalachian Journal* over the last few decades have also analyzed the various ways in which identity and power are linked.^{vii} All of this literature unveils one essential truth about Appalachians: that none of the images, artworks, literature, or televisual depictions of Appalachia are concerned with the “truth” of Appalachia. These images are deployed according to national cultural, economic, and social anxieties and prop up class, race, and gender ideologies in American culture. Ultimately, the stereotypical identities linked to Appalachia continue to circulate and are therefore continually being reproduced. This constant circulation is, in part, due to larger historical conditions that produce Western identities through discourses about seemingly unrelated aesthetic, rhetorical, and social ideologies.

Strikingly, the medium in which some of the most caricaturing the nineteenth-century writings on Appalachians occurs was the magazine, a crossroads of both visual arts and literature. Will Wallace Harney not only published for *Lippincott Magazine*, but also for *Harper’s Magazine*. *Harper’s Magazine*, first published in 1850, printed not

only articles but also literary and visual art works by renowned writers and artists. Interestingly, American realists Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington, were published by the magazine. Art work coexisted with literature that recounted the nature of Appalachia in fiction for the young American nation.^{viii} This juxtaposition reveals the contingent nature of image and text in the construction of myths and identities—myths of the West were so powerfully woven in Americans' psyche because of the alacrity of painting in conveying deceptively simple scenes of the American West and plains.^{ix} Frederic Remington, a nineteenth-century American painter, embarked on his art career as an illustrator for *Harper's Weekly* as the magazine was then known. Historically significant for his dichotomous depictions of the cowboy and the Indian, Remington contributed to the insatiable American appetite for images of the West.^x Alongside images of the backward mountaineer/hillbilly, Remington's works illustrated for America an already disappearing American West, edged out by the civilizing effects of the train, communication, urbanization, and the new era of manufacturing in American culture. *Harper's Weekly*, then, was a periodical that sponsored and generated myths about the not-yet distant American past, creating nostalgia for the West on the one hand and encouraging forward-thinking on the other through its stereotypes of a backwards mountain people. *Harper's* history demonstrates the coexistence and codependence of seemingly disparate traditions; literature and the visual arts are important tools in deploying ideology in Western culture. Landscape and the allegorizing female subject are two such rhetorical ideologies that often intertwine in the American imagination.

Landscape and the Visual Arts Tradition

The envisioned landscape is linked to a complex visual arts tradition that allegorizes Western identity through spectacular images of untouched land. This metaphor of the untouched landscape has also been allegorized by the female form. *Country Roads* is a cultural product that links both land and women in its imaging of the mountainous homeland of songwriters Bill Danoff and Taffy Nivert. Land and women are important metaphors for Appalachia, reflecting the sublime natural beauty of the land or embodying the desecration of the land and the perceived degeneracy of its people. The female body, as it exhibits the signs of age or sexual availability, reflect both the tremendous natural beauty of the land and the harsh effects of mountain life on the body.

Beginning with the writings of early European colonizers like Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, characterizations of the Americas often underscored their *exceptional* beauty and the spiritual connection Europeans felt to the land, thus justifying colonization as a process of destiny. Recounting the flora, fauna, and native communities he encountered, Christopher Columbus's letters reflect the new Renaissance interest in describing reality. This interest in observation and truth, however, emerged in a religious framework of country, fate, and the belief in the smallness of man in the face of god. This would change as exploration expanded and the new lands were colonized and charted; the awesome unknown would be transformed into a quantified known.

Contributing to the wealth of exploration and discovery that led to the Enlightenment period, Columbus's reality was not yet purely empirical. Nor, arguably,

would accounts of the land ever become removed from the “spirit” of the observer or their agendas behind their observation because of the incredible value of land; land was the organizing principle of class and social identity in feudal Europe and would continue as the site for the construction of American identities and ideologies up to our own modern era. In his description of his experience of the Cuban coastline, where he named Puerto Santo on November 24, 1492, Columbus wrote:

The beauty of this river, and the crystalness of the water, through which the sand at the bottom may be seen; the multitude of palm-trees of various forms, the highest and most beautiful that I have met with, and an infinity of other great and green trees, the birds, in rich plumage, and the verdure of the fields, render this country, most serene princes, of such marvellous [sic] beauty, that it surpasses all others in charms and graces, as the day doth the night in lustre. For which reason I often say to my people that, much as I endeavor to give a complete account of it to your majesties, my tongue cannot express the whole truth, nor my pen describe it. And I have been so overwhelmed at the sight of so much beauty, that I have not known how to relate to it.^{xi}

Columbus was tasked with claiming, naming, and explaining the “New World” to his royal sponsors. Yet within his descriptions, he claims to have reached the limits of his own descriptive ability, telling his sponsors that the land is so overwhelming that he has not the language to describe it. For Columbus, he has reached the end of humanity; for Western culture, this limit often meant that humanity had encountered the boundaries of divine fate.

There are essentially two themes that emerge in the descriptions written about the Americas. The first takes the form of flowery prose that recounts the explorers’ encounters with an alien, rich land, describing its indescribable beauty in awe-filled and reverent tones. The second theme is empirical, whose informational task was to quantify the nature of people, land, and materials in the “New World” for specific economic and expansionist purposes. Much of the later writings by French, British, and Spanish explorers who followed Columbus shifted away from the awe-filled rhetoric of early exploration, tasked as they were to connect with and conduct political calculations of natives and colonists in order to chart territory and build trade empires for Western powers. Samuel de Champlain, the French explorer who was a major character in the formation of “New France” in what is known as Canada today, wrote a history of his experiences as explorer and man of the government called *The Voyage and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain (1604-1616)*. Champlain’s history was more concerned with a literal accounting of the material and natural resources of the land translated in practical terms than a spiritual transformation through encounters with and conquests of the land:

It must be said also that the country of New France is a new world, not a kingdom; perfectly beautiful, with very convenient locations, both on the banks of the great river St. Lawrence (the ornament of the country) and on other rivers, lakes, ponds, and brooks. It has, too, an infinite number of beautiful islands, and they contain very pleasant and delightful meadows and groves, where, during the spring and the summer, may be seen a great number of birds which come there in their time and season.^{xii}

These two themes within writings about the “New World” and Americas reflected the status of cultural, economic, and colonial expansion at the time. Writing like that of Columbus often appeared at the vanguard of an historical epoch wherein the ideologies of European global expansion were being formed, defined, and focused. Writing like that of Champlain was less ambiguously ideological. Champlain was transparently practical in the way he catalogued the land as if it were a laundry list of resources—human, animal, or mineral—that happened to be beautiful.

The beauty of the land as a political rhetorical device would reemerge in the nineteenth century in the discourse between government, land, and westward expansion. In this instance, the rhetoric was accompanied by a Western art tradition whose roots lied in European philosophy and Romanticism: landscape painting. There were two branches of this painting tradition, a European school driven by Romantic ideas about nature and the necessity of man’s return to a morally primitive state, and an American school whose roots were tied to the observation of nature, the European search for the sublime, and the American ideology of Manifest Destiny. The European landscape painting tradition emerged in the 1830s as a response to growing tensions between artists and the art establishment and the new kinds of social classes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, social revolutions, and the European capitalist economy. Landscape painting was a means of celebrating rural culture while denying the hegemony of Western painting traditions as governed by Paris’s Salon, the British Royal Academy, and the state-sanctioned Neoclassical tradition. It was also the first move by artists toward a new modern artistic identity, one that would use the female form as the visual focus of anxiety about masculinity, industrial technology, and urbanization.^{xiii}

The song *Country Roads* is but one instance where women and land are rhetorically conflated as one through the invocation of a particular Appalachian identity. In the song’s journey, the traveler is led by a loving woman across majestic land over winding, mountainous roads. Indeed, there is a prolific visual history of female figures who allegorically characterize lands colonized during the industrial age and Enlightenment period of Western culture.^{xiv} In this visual tradition, individual and social identities are constructed through a dialectical relationship between self and land. Social art historian Frances K. Pohl, in her book *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*, writes at length about this practice in American visual culture. Nineteenth century artists, continuing the traditions began by Christopher Columbus and Samuel de Champlain, used flowery and grand pictorial descriptions of the land to describe the purity of the American landscape. These historical writings, in focusing on the sublime character of the land, also justified the necessity and rights of Europeans to occupy and consume these new lands, framing it as a place of European destiny and identity. The landscape paintings, too, accomplished this ideological mythmaking by imagining the land through particular frames and narratives. Pohl writes:

Through displays of the heroic wilderness or the cultivated landscape, American artists attempted to formulate an image of nationhood that accommodated religious, scientific, and commercial concerns, that celebrated God’s wonders while at the same time promoting the

expropriation and exploitation of the land crucial to the expansionist plans of America's political and industrial elite.^{xv}

Within this visual discourse of land and expansionist ideology, moral themes structured the rhetoric of the landscape. These themes either dichotomized whites versus blacks, whites versus Indians, whites versus nature, civilized versus uncivilized, or rural versus urban. Albert Boime, in his 1991 book *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting c. 1830-1865*, argues that the American version of the Romantic landscape painting tradition was not only linked to particularly American ideologies, but also to specific technologies of seeing that emerged from these ideologies. In his opening to the text he writes:

The privileged nineteenth-century American's experience of the sublime in the landscape occurred on the heights. The characteristic viewpoint of contemporary American landscapists traced a visual trajectory from the uplands to a scenic panorama below. Almost invariably the compositions were arranged with the spectator in mind, either assuming the elevated viewpoint of the onlooker or including a staffage figure seen from behind that functioned as a surrogate onlooker. This Olympian bearing metonymically embraced past, present, and future, synchronically plotting the course of the empire.^{xvi}

The landscape was a significant tool in structuring the debate about American expansion. In prints, the land was sometimes represented as continent, which depicted the Americas as a Grecian goddess, standing contrapposto in classical garb next to her sister continents Europa, Africa, and Asia. The deployment of the female form as allegory is a Neoclassical art tradition; sculptures, paintings, and architecture revived the classical language, forms, and subjects of ancient Greece and Rome, using them as a kind of class based visual language that merged the past with the present.^{xvii}

Indeed in mid-nineteenth century Europe, while landscape painting emerged, new allegorical figures appeared in paintings depicting contemporary political events and conflicts. One of the best known works that employs the female subject as an allegorical rallying point for the French is Eugène Delacroix's *The 28th of July: Liberty Leading the People*, painted in 1830. French king Charles X was challenged by the public in a street insurrection on July 28, 1830 for his autocratic rule and corruption. Art historian Thomas Crow writes of the painting:

Delacroix turned to his immediately previous personification of the same urgent demands: a change in headgear to the Phrygian cap of the great Revolution (the mark of a freed slave in antiquity) and *Greece* becomes Marianne, emerged from the long darkness of royal tyranny to fight for France. In that she is a woman, she completes the whole of humanity; in that she can be nude, she represents the natural condition of humankind, suffocated by oppression but revealed again in revolt.^{xviii}

In Delacroix's allegorical female figure, freedom is represented by a classical nude, simultaneously linked to the moment of revolt and to the first freedmen of ancient Greece two millennia prior. Freedom, in this instance, is also France as she carries the French flag and rallies the fighters in the revolt behind her.

America, too, has been allegorized as a classical female figure. The best known example is the *Statue of Liberty*, sculpted by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, gifted to the United States by the French government, and dedicated on October 28, 1886.^{xix} Allegorical women appeared in nearly every medium and were institutionalized as part of the national rhetoric of America's classical inheritance. Francis K. Pohl, in writing about the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, describes a stock certificate published in the nineteenth century using women figures as allegories for the American landscape. In her discussion of the F. O. C. Darley and Stephen J. Ferris *Centennial Stock Certificate from 1874-5*, she writes:

The stock certificate is divided into three registers, each containing groupings of figures that, together, frame the text in the center. The main characters in the top register are women—not historical characters but allegorical representations of continents and concepts. America, dressed in the classical garb of Liberty and wearing a liberty cap, stands in the center, her arms extended in a welcoming gesture to either side.^{xx}

As lady Liberty, America represents a particularly American reading of the classical allegory. Her widespread arms, in conjunction with the value of a stock certificate—a document that represents the value of exchanged in a market based on commodities—invite the viewer to see America as a land of wealth. Liberty represents the abundance of America, her land, classical heritage (and therefore civilized status), and capital wealth. Her open arms invite us to step into their comforting circle, to be nurtured by her wealth. Women-as-classical-allegories of freedom and nation were yet another manifestation of the beauty of the “New World” written about by explorers and depicted as sublime landscapes by painters. However, the female figure in popular culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emerges as a particularized character, breaking away from this generalized allegory of abundance, land, and liberty, only in instances that demonstrate and decry uncivilized behavior, specularize a racial *other*, and indict a class for its slothfulness.

Appalachia Mamas, the Landscape, and Lynndie England

In *Country Roads*, “Mountain mommas”^{xxi} presumes a state of motherhood or reproductive potential in its female character, a conflation that is particularly Appalachian because of the long tradition of depicting Appalachian women as fecund: sexual creatures or overly reproductive mothers. In such images visual culture, moral and ideological themes often manifest as contrasts between the weak and the strong. Feminist art historians see this as a component of the larger discourse between masculinity and femininity, culturally constructed identities superimposed on the human body and subject through practice, repetition, and perception. A specific masculine and feminine duality emerges in the mid-nineteenth century in response to cultural, social, and political revolutions and continues to structure gender in the public sphere throughout all of the twentieth century. At the same time, however, paintings of the nineteenth century continually re-inscribed cultural norms and traditions, particularly those that were relevant to the freedom of women. Gill Perry, a feminist art historian, writes about the interplay of gender, behavior, and sexuality in the mid-nineteenth century:

Feminist historians and art historians have produced a wealth of material to show how contemporary ideals of bourgeois femininity, as revealed in various forms of written and visual culture, often revolved around models of domesticity, passivity, and prettified images of decorative women. [. . .] their prevalence has led such images to be referred to as ‘normative’ constructions of femininity. Thus portraits of women were widely expected to represent their decorative qualities, their beauty and fashionable or elegant dress and by implication the status and wealth of their husband or family.^{xxii}

The female subject in portraits, then, was normatively depicted according to her class, family status, and domesticity-femininity. The Appalachian woman, already excluded from this tradition due to her low economic and social status, would receive similar treatments in visual culture only to set up a comparison between her and her upper-class, white counterparts.

Workers’ uprisings, the American Civil War, and suffrage movements in Europe and the United States radically challenged the status quo. Stephen Eisenman describes it as a time when:

[V]iolence, political struggle, social change, and periodic crisis seemed entrenched in the West. Though no major wars raged, present and future prospects were unclear and unsettled: many artists and writers described their time as an age of “transition,” a period of “decadence” or a “penultimate age,” implying that the approaching millennium would bring sweeping changes to an unstable or even degenerate world.^{xxiii}

This period of anxiety marks the beginning of the Modern Art period in Western art history. In Modernist art, dualisms are constructed based on the tension resulting in the repression of a lesser in favor of something greater: Masculine/Feminine, White/Black, High Art/Low Art, Culture/Nature, Production/Reproduction, Disinterested Judgment/Interested Judgment, and Modern/Primitive. Scholar Marianne Dekoven sees this unfolding in the literature of the time as well. Dekoven argues in her essay “Modernism and Gender” that femininity is at the center of all of these dualisms, used as a sign of difference that orders and defines Modernist masculinity. She writes:

[A] closer look at Modernism through its complex deployments of gender reveals not only the centrality of femininity, but also, again, an irresolvable ambivalence toward radical cultural change at the heart of modernist formal innovation in the works of both male and female writers.^{xxiv}

When connected to the important scholarship of recent Appalachian studies scholars—Billings, Harkins, Hatfield—the emergence of Appalachian stereotypes make sense. The Appalachian woman, in particular, represents sexual fecundity at its peak and the prematurely aged mother, visualizing the out-of-control fertility of a lower class judged by the upper-classes to be degenerate. The Appalachian woman, just as the classical allegory and the female nude in Western painting, was a locus within a network of “complex deployments of gender” whose sexuality and maternal nature worked as signifiers of her class.

Early writers about Appalachia attribute these characteristics to both African American and white Appalachians. Will Wallace Harney, in his account of the Appalachians that appeared in *Lippencott's Magazine* in 1887, wrote of his encounter with an African American woman:

Another miserable picture was at the white cottage near our camp. The lawn showed evidences of an old taste in rare flowers and vines, now choked with weeds. I knocked, and a slovenly negress opened the door and revealed the sordid interior—an unspread bed; a foul table, sickly with the smell of half-eaten food and unwashed dishes; the central figure a poor helpless man sitting on a stool. I asked the negress for her master: she answered rudely that she had no master, and would have slammed the door in my face. Why tell the story of a life surrounded by taste and womanly adornments, followed by a childless, wifeless old age? The poor, wizened creature was rotting in life on that low stool among his former dependents, their support and scorn. The Emancipation Proclamation did not reach him. But one power could break his bonds and restore the fallen son and the buried wife—the great liberator, Death.^{xxv}

Harney, like Fox and others, sees poverty as a sign of their subject's laziness and uncivilized nature rather than as an indication of economic disparities experienced by African and Appalachian Americans.

This visual archive endures and evolves in popular print, television, and film imagery in the later part of the twentieth century. Anthony Harkins has written a critical history of these productions of American popular culture, from films like *Comin' Round the Mountain*, *Deliverance*, *Kentucky Moonshine*, *Mountain Justice*, the *Ma and Pa Kettle* sequels, to television programs like *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, and *Hee Haw*. Harkins's history is nearly comprehensive and therefore this essay will not rehash his work. What remains to be discussed is the peculiar ways in which women as mothers are characterized in more contemporary examples and how those characterizations emerge to connect with "real" Appalachian women. Indeed, these archetypes have reached far beyond the boundaries of popular culture, coloring the stories of many contemporary Appalachian women. I will look at how one figure, Lynndie England, is identified within this framework. Before examining her story, let us look first at Hollywood precedents imported into her narrative.

John Boorman's 1972 film *Deliverance*, a modern tale of journey, threat, and urban man's discovery of rugged masculinity, offers a particularly tragic image of an Appalachian mother.^{xxvi} During the "Dueling Banjos" scene near the beginning of the film, we catch a glimpse into the interior of a poor Appalachian family's home in a rural village where the mother sits inside in the dark with her numerous children, most of whom are sick or deformed. The mother appears "normal" as she offers succor to the child she holds, contrasting sharply with the abnormal children who surround her. In this instance, the Appalachian mother is like Harney's occupants in the rural, broken-down cabin. The African American woman, apparently a freed slave, is indicted by Harney for the dirty state of her home, insinuating that it is her "absent master" who is to blame for her inability to keep a tidy domestic sphere and that only under supervision can she be

expected to have a home that meets Harney's standards. *Deliverance*, too, indicts the mother for the state of her family, but not because she lacks a master. Rather, the way in which Boorman frames the scene—juxtaposing interior and exterior spaces so that we understand that the dark interior of the home is meant to *hide* the hideousness of the children. Once we see them, we are meant to understand that the combination of isolation, questionable familial relations (in the form of inter-family marriages), and poverty bring out the worst in this Appalachian family's gene pool; their physiognomy testifies to the deviance of the family structure. The only coherent sign of civilization comes when one of the children, using a banjo, engages in a musical duel with one of the story's characters who is a guitar player. Of course, the child is incapable of speaking and thus his music speaks for him, signifying some semblance of the civilization once known by ancestors of these mountain whites.

The banjo itself has come to represent a film viewer's entrance into the alternative universe of Appalachia.^{xxvii} In perhaps a re-conceptualization of the *Deliverance* story as a horror film, Neil Marshall's 2005 film *Descent* anchors his story in the Appalachian mountains, even though it was filmed in the United Kingdom, through the music the women listen to as they are driving through the mountains. The faint strumming of a banjo can be heard on the radio as a group of women begin their journey to the mountains of North Carolina to go spelunking. The protagonist is a recent widow who lost her daughter and husband in an accident the previous year and sets out on a trip with her friends to get her life back on track. The women find themselves trapped in the caves they are exploring, threatened by an ancient species of human cannibals who have adapted to the cave climate and darkness. The theme of motherhood in this film is more ambiguous. First, the protagonist finds herself drawn into the cave by what she believes to be the ghost of her child, making her feel as if she belongs there. Second, the deviant children of *Deliverance* are re-imagined as hideous cave creatures who themselves are the threat to the party of adventurers, whereas in *Deliverance* mountain men are the sexual and murderous threats to the exploring hunters in Georgia. The deviance has shifted into more horrific terms in *Descent*, collapsing all Appalachians into a hideous race of cave monsters who can no more stand the light of day than the children in the cabin in *Deliverance*. In both films, the landscape is more than a backdrop for the drama, it becomes a significant player in the narrative—the wildness in *Deliverance* the setting of Georgian city-dwellers' hunting playground and mountain men's sexual crime scene and the sublime darkness of the mountains' dark and seeping interiors in *Descent* the setting for the heinous deaths of beautiful women.

This thread of deviance—of geography metonymically invoking the corruption of characters—manifested in connection media characterizations of Lynndie England, the Army PFC tried and convicted of torturing and abusing prisoners at the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison that was under the control of the U. S. military in 2004 and 2005. England, a resident of West Virginia prior to her deployment to Iraq, was excoriated by the media for her participation in the abuse at the prison and invoked her Appalachian ethnicity as explanation for a woman's role in such a heinous system of abuse. One blogger called it "Deliverance Comes to Iraq," accompanying their text with photos of England abusing

prisoners and giving the “thumbs up” sign to the camera next to a photo still of the rape scene from the film *Deliverance*.^{xxviii}

Rolling Stone magazine also leapt on England’s ethnicity, writing in a 2004 article called “Ms. America”: “What a pathetic ending it was for Pvt. Lynndie England, that little hillbilly twit with the rabbit cheeks and the upturned thumb who made the words ‘Abu Ghraib’ infamous.”^{xxix} The image that accompanied the article juxtaposed England standing next to a pile of Iraqi prisoners with another photograph of England, one where she is holding her newborn infant. The rhetorical indictment is clear: England, mother, is also England, a torturer. Arguably, only a figure whose identity could import such a venomous history of stereotypes would receive such treatment in the media in this new millennium. In ways chiasmically opposite to nineteenth century French paintings of women as the decorative property of men or the continuation of the practice of deploying identities because of social and political anxieties, the Appalachian woman as mother has remained an important character in a repertory of stereotypes because she is the ultimate sign of regional decrepitude. While her beautiful exterior may fool us into believing she is “normal”, this discourse on the Appalachian mother, the truth of her nature will emerge either in her offspring or in acts committed by her. “Traditional” images of motherhood hid in the background as the frames for understanding the “appropriate nature” of motherhood in *Deliverance*, *Descent*, and the story of Lynndie England. As we see with the ways in which England’s behaviors are conflated with some notion of her ethnic degeneracy, normative notions of motherhood are generated by dominant culture and have the power to define and prescribe the parameters of motherhood as an identity in Appalachia. So, while John Denver and the songwriters of *Country Roads* may journey home in the arms of “mountain mommas,” they do not literally mean to invoke the mothers of the mountains that Americans have come to so deeply fear, nor do they mean the literal landscape scarred by the coal industry. No, they refer to instead a distant misty mountain range and the wholesome hearth of the *Waltons*. *Country Roads*’s “mountain mommas” relies on that mythic, sublime landscape and nineteenth-century visions of a pure American mountaineer.

ⁱ John Denver, Bill Danoff, and Taffy Nivert, “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” *Poems, Prayers, and Promises*. Vinyl Record. RCA, 1971.

ⁱⁱ Anthony Harkins, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 34.

ⁱⁱⁱ “Mountaineer,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 20 September 2007, March 2003
<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00316973?query_type=word&queryword=mountaineer&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=7xnF-nfhXoW-753&hilite=00316973>.

^{iv} Will Wallace Harney, “A Strange Land and a Peculiar People,” *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, 2nd edition (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1995) 48.

^v William Goodell Frost “Our Contemporary Ancestors,” *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, 100.

^{vi} John Fox, Jr. “The Southern Mountaineer,” *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, 123.

^{vii} Just a few of the most important works to mention are Darlene Wilson’s, “The Felicitous Convergence of Mythmaking and Capital Accumulation: John Fox Jr. and the Formation of An(Other) Almost-White American Underclass.” *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 1 (1995): 5-44; Altina Waller, “Feuding in Appalachia: Evolution of a Cultural Stereotype,” *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the*

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viii "The History of Harper's," *Harper's Monthly* 20 September 2007,

<<http://www.harpers.org/harpers/about>>.

ix French theorist Roland Barthes has written extensively on the rhetorical links and layers between image and text. *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, translated by Richard Howard. Los Angeles, CA: University of California P, 1985.

x Francis K. Pohl *Framing America: A Social History of American Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002) 238.

xi Quoted in John Stevens Cabot Abbott, *Christopher Columbus* (New York: University Library, 1903) 103-4.

xii Samuel de Champlain *The Voyages and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain (1604-1616)*, Annie Thomson, trans. (New York: Alberton Book Co., 1922) 3.

xiii Richard Brettell, in his book *Modern Art 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation*, writes extensively about the dependency of artistic identity, subject matter, and nineteenth-century responses to the conditions of life during the new modern age. (Oxford History of Art Series. New York, Oxford UP, 1999).

xiv One famous woman who led Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, the leaders of the 1804-6 expedition, across the Western frontier in a journey that led to the expansion of American borders to the Pacific coastline was the Shoshone guide Sacajawea.

xv Pohl 131.

xvi Albert Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830-1865* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) 1.

xvii Thomas Crow, "Classicism in Crisis: Gros to Delacroix," Stephen Eisenman, *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History*, 2nd Edition (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2002): 55-81.

xviii Crow 80.

xix "History and Culture," *National Park Service: Statue of Liberty* 20 September 2007, 5 October 2006, <<http://www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/index.htm>>.

xx Pohl 241.

xxi As a child, my sister and I referred to our mother as "Mama." In the title of this essay, I use that spelling of the word rather than *Country Roads*'s spelling in order to foreground my own, particular nostalgia the song invokes.

xxii Gill Perry, "Introduction: Gender and Art History," *Gender and Art* (New Haven, Yale UP, 1999): 17.

xxiii Eisenman 8.

xxiv Marianne Dekoven, "Modernism and Gender," *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, Michael Levenson, ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1999): 175.

xxv Harney 48.

xxvi *Deliverance*, dir. John Boorman, perf. Burt Reynolds, Ronny Cox, Jon Voight, and Ned Beatty, Warner Bros, 1972.

xxvii *Descent*, dir. Neil Marshall, Shauna Macdonald, Alex Reid, Natalie Mendoza, Nora-Jane Noone, MyAnna Buring, and Saskia Mulder, Celador Films, 2005.

xxviii Oliver Poole, "America's Abu Ghraib Torture Prison to Close," *The Telegraph*, www.telegraph.co.uk March 10, 2006, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/03/10/wirq10.xml&sSheet=/portal/2006/03/10/ixportal.html>>.

xxix Matt Taibbi, "Ms. America," *Rolling Stone Magazine* 985 (20 October 2005): 47.

STUDENT'S HEIRLOOMS IN THE CLASSROOM: A LOOK AT EVERYDAY ART FORMS

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of students' heirloom in the classroom, as a means to look at art forms found in everyday life. A contextual framework is given for a brief analysis of the heirloom in relation to the Appalachian region mountain culture. The heirloom is examined in this context through the use of a folkloric approach, applying formal elements of art, historic traditions, and change. The Appalachian heirloom can be used as a means to provide contextual stories, history, cultural ties reflecting the region, and rooted in a sense of place.

Introduction

One teaching approach, to awaken or strengthen an affinity towards art, is the use of students' heirlooms in the classroom. In examining an Appalachian heirloom, the student can learn about the contextual framework, consisting of a Folkloric approach, formal elements of art, and traditions or derivatives. Family heirlooms used for this purpose are defined as art forms passed down through the family representing the regional Appalachian mountain culture. The heirloom considered may presently or previously been a functional tool for everyday use and regarded as aesthetic or pleasing.

Contextual Framework Folkloric Approach

In looking at the heirloom, a student can question if the piece fits into a particular folk group within an Appalachian region. A description of a folk group is "any group of people who share informal communal contracts that become the basis for expressive, culture-based communication" (Congdon, 2000, p. 147; Toelken, 1979, p. 51). According to Congdon (1988), a folk group may include Avant-garde artists who formulate in various ways into folk groups. She continues, "Group members often share common jargon, values, aesthetics, and perhaps folk tales, as well as conceptualizations of themselves as a group" (Congdon, 1988, p. 154). The art forms may serve as a source of stories, which document life (Morris, 2000).

The stories may communicate aspects of media, culture, place, time, artists, and observation for the purpose of appreciation, understanding, and dialogue (Morris, 2000). Social historians believe that a work of art "carries ideas and that these ideas are shaped by specific historical, political, and social circumstances" (Barnet, 2005, p. 200). Barnet

(2005) claims that “a work of art, like a religious, legal, or political system, is a creation deeply implicated in the values of the culture that produced and consumed it” (p. 201).

Connecting an art piece to a folk group within a region establishes a sense of place. Elements of art are tied to the mountain culture, instead of standing alone (Morris, 2000). A sense of place is more than a visual image (Morris, 2000). It serves as a metaphor in regard to the Appalachian heritage through the art form. It also lends an understanding and renews the appreciation of mountain culture (Morris, 2001).

An example of art tied to a folk group and region is an engagement basket made in the Eastern Kentucky/Tennessee mountain region. In this region, a matrimonial value passed down through the generations, entails a man making a miniature melon basket to give as a gift during his proposal (Darvin Messer, personal communication, June 10, 2003). The giving and acceptance of this basket is understood and communicated communally within the folk group to be an informal proposed contract of marriage.

Basket makers often rely on folklore passed down from generations. This body of shared knowledge aids in the selection and preparation of materials (Blair, 1995). The Appalachian engagement basket is fashioned in a traditional way and made to last many years. It is crafted with split oak weavers which are split with the grain of the wood. Oak trees are indigenous to the Appalachian region and are usually found in higher elevations (Blair, 1995). The basket makers select the wood based upon the environment and conditions producing the best timber (Blair, 1995). The wooden weavers are tapered at the end as they meet the diamond shaped God’s eye design which is used to connect the handle.

Artwork can be a means of communication and a cultural artifact (Congdon, 1988; Chalmers, 1981). The engagement basket can be studied as a cultural artifact and communicates values, ways, aesthetics, traditions, craftsmanship, sense of place, history related to the culture. Stuhr (1991) found that traditional aesthetic art forms provide “visual, functional, and conceptual metaphors and symbols for the perceived philosophical and harmonious relationship between the artist and the environment” (p. 86). By looking at the basket as a cultural artifact within a folk group rather than within diverse ethnic groups, it fits well within multicultural education.

Morris (2000) claims that a colonialist perspective on teaching art forms emphasizes only the skill component. However, she suggests that the art form must not be separated from other art forms and from the place of origin. By separating the melon basket from the environment and placing it in a museum with a placard naming the artist, title and medium, the meaning is lost. The craftsmanship and skill is apparent, but its context is not.

Formal Elements of Art

We have chosen to use three general components of the discipline of art criticism in our critical analysis of the heirloom. These include description, interpretation and

judgment. This process will involve asking questions about the heirloom. It is our intention to give a brief overview of the use of these components.

Description is the first method and includes the examination of the external information. According to Barnett (2005), a formal analysis consists mostly of description. This approach typically centers on the medium of the piece and the formal elements of art. The medium is a term that identifies specific materials used by the artist. It can also be used to designate a general grouping of art, such as painting, sculpture, textile, baskets, or pottery.

The description of the piece usually includes some or all of the formal elements of art. The elements include line, shape, space, pattern, texture, and color. Sculptural pieces are usually examined in the way they occupy space. They can also be described in terms of the use of an additive or subtractive process. The subject matter, scale, color, and arrangement of the piece also offers valuable insight into the analysis. Two dimensional pieces of art are examined for their use of shapes, lines, colors, subject matter, and composition. The description can also involve analyzing works of art based on techniques and craftsmanship.

Interpretive strategies ask the viewer to present their own understanding of the heirloom. Barnett (2005) defines interpretation as a “setting forth of the meaning of a work of art” (p. 23). Interpretations ask what is the intention or function of the piece of art. Does the piece conjure up memories of places, events, or individuals for the viewer? Each individual’s response to an art form is unique and is based on his or her own experiences. “A work of art may stimulate a variety of interpretations from different viewers because we each bring our own attitudes and knowledge” (Katz, Lankford & Plan, 1995, p. 50). Interpretations allow the viewer (can be someone outside the culture) to provide their own explanation of the piece.

In considering the formal elements of art, associations tied to them vary. European-based Western art has been part of the dominant art culture, however not all cultures provide the same meanings and associations. Hurwitz and Day (2007) support the use of various approaches found in world cultures specifically in handling space in a work of art. For example a Japanese work of art may use space with floating images and overlapping techniques, while not including a horizon line.

After considering these issues involving describing and interpreting the piece, the viewer can then form their own judgment. This can be based on the degree of skill that went into creating the piece or be subjective in terms of personal aesthetics. Barrett (1996) found that in order for a judgment to have validity it should be based and supported by evidence present in the actual piece of art.

Value and Appreciation of Heirloom

The analysis of the heirloom should also consider the meaning of the art form through aesthetics. Basket making allows artists to express beauty in utilitarian objects

and continue a tradition. A well-crafted melon basket is aesthetic and pleasing within the folk group.

A basket and other heirlooms often reflect meaning apparent only to members of the culture in which they are created. Blair (1995) found that, “most Appalachian basket makers were taught to make baskets by a parent, relative, or community member, and they began to make baskets at a very young age” (p. 65). The significance of the art form is often lost to individuals outside its ethnic culture. Examining traditional art from a specific culture can present opportunity to reconstruct some of the missing information. The construction and material used in an Appalachian basket offers insight and links to specific cultural traditions (Blair, 1995).

To better understand the meaning of the piece, look for the signs and symbols incorporated into the art forms. “Social historians assume that every art form, if carefully scrutinized, tells a story of the culture” (Barnet, 2005, p. 199). They assume that the work of art “carries ideas and that these ideas are shaped by specific historical, political, and social circumstances” (Barnet, 2005, p. 200).

The symbols can represent ideas, which can communicate to others, a state of mind and meaning in the art (Day & Hurwitz, 2007; Dissanayake, 1988). The metaphors may be a tool to teach those within the culture. Social, spiritual, and moral issues as well as a shared situation may be gleaned from the symbols (Morris, 2000).

Tradition

Traditional art forms offer the best insight into the cultural heritage of the heirloom because they closely match the processes and techniques used by the artists of that specific culture. According to Stuhr (1991) traditional art forms are generally utilitarian and that the “relationship between traditional art forms and the environment is historic, absolute, and strong” (p. 85). It is the link that helps the viewer to appreciate the value of their heirloom. Stuhr (1991) claims that the traditional art forms are “generally utilitarian, sometimes possessing great spiritual powers, and often fashioned in the “old way” (p. 83).

When traditional art forms are not available Stuhr (1991) recommends using derivative examples because they “still generally embody the values of the traditional ethnic communities” (p. 86). Derivative artists produce pieces of art based on the original design and similar in style to the traditional artist (Stuhr, 1991). Many basket makers continue to create traditional baskets but add their own personal touches. Stuhr defines derivative art forms as those that are modified either partially or totally from the traditional materials or processes. This may come in the form of an Appalachian basket that utilizes commercial reeds but still adheres to the traditional weaving techniques. According to Stuhr (1991) these art forms offer some connections to the narratives and to the environment in which they are created.

Baskets that fall under the modern category can vary widely, but according to Stuhr (1991) these art forms “emphasize the aesthetic rather than the utilitarian purpose” (p. 97). These art forms may look authentic but usually do not follow the proper procedures in accordance with the traditional techniques or embody the traditional narratives. Most of the modern artists Stuhr (1991) interviewed revealed that the visual connections between their artwork and their culture were secondary to their own personal agenda. They contribute these references to the common use of “recycled images” or “natural materials” (Stuhr, 1991). Recycled images are cultural symbols and metaphors that are taken out of context and do not reflect the traditions. The use, of these images in a work of art, is only to enhance the artist’s own individual style.

Recommendations

When incorporating heirlooms into the classroom, we recommend that teachers always try to use traditional or derivative pieces to aid their students in not only developing an appreciation of the tools, materials, and processes that were used to create the pieces, but also to value the rich cultural history the art forms have to offer. Using modern art forms in the classroom may offer recycled images that do not reflect the traditional values of the culture.

We recommend that teachers include multiple perspectives when conducting critical analysis of the Appalachian heirlooms. We feel that using heirlooms can start a dialogue which provides cultural ties reflecting the region and rooted to a sense of place. We selected a basket because it is an art form created by almost every culture and provides valuable information about the artist and their values and cultural heritage.

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This paper is dedicated to Aaron, Philip, Batya, Shanya, Ana, and Nicholas.

WHOLENESS LESSONS

Traci K. Deveny

One of the many things that I admire in Appalachia is that we not only make do but we also live extravagantly with the simple pleasures of life. As I volunteer I try to bring the best of what I have seen the past to offer the future generations. I have divided them when into four basic categories. These I try to teach wherever I go, in what ever age group I am with. The categories include journaling, sketching, harmonica, and knitting. These four exemplify what we do best. No matter what our situation or station we can maintain a full life.

The first being journaling. Many times I have taught workshops with teenagers and heard more than once, "No matter what is going on in my life I can write." First we go over writing about our daily life, then, we proceed to different examples of creative writing. I try hard, because of school requirements, to let everyone know that this writing is for self, for self-fulfillment. It has nothing to do with anyone else, and no one else need read it. This allows for an outlet all through life.

How many of us have understood history better because we read an autobiography? Someday people could understand our time better because of our journals. Or maybe just our children and grandchildren will read it. I also offer the idea that they can be destroyed. It is what ever we need in the writing process.

In the same line I add sketching to the journals. I emphasize drawing our surroundings and the people in our lives. I do this for two reasons. The first is because everybody thinks they can draw people. And they can. The second is because there is nothing like the familiarity of drawing one's family and friends and looking back years later. The basics of drawing are on the elements of shape. With the technique of breaking everything down into lines and circles anything can be drawn. I am always amazed at the look on people spaces when they realize that the secret to drawing is to draw. I always emphasize that what you do for 21 days becomes a habit, but if you quit for three it's gone. Twenty-one days is manageable for most people and builds a lifelong habit.

When I start to teach the harmonica everyone explains that they cannot learn music. I then explain that all they need is a good teacher. I then explain that music has been shrouded with mystery, but is as simple as elementary math. I quickly go through the five sentences that explain the notes of the staff. After memorizing these five sentences I then announce that already they know 23 know notes.

I then met again with opposition that they do not understand. Then we have the lesson of "memorize don't analyze". Then we immediately go to the harmonica itself. There are lots of giggles and apologies, but whether they like it or not they are making music. For six dollars they have a lifelong companion. The harmonica is versatile to all kinds of music and can be taken anywhere.

The final group of lessons deals with knitting. Any kind of Needlecraft would do, yet knitting is the least gender related. I always start out by stating that every country in the world it is normal for men to do Needlecraft and dance other than here. We can change that together. I then mention that college campuses are full of people knitting. And that the guys are going because the girls are there. Then they discovered that they are even better knitters than the girls. With this information there becomes a friendly competition especially with teen boys and girls. And usually the boys end up being better knitters.

I am aware that my approach is traditional. But that is what I'm about. No matter what people's education or financial situation these four talents can accompany them through their entire life. And isn't that the kind of hands on practical people we are?